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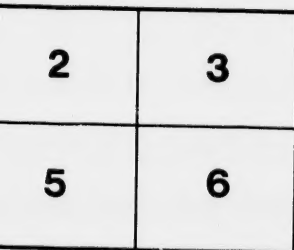
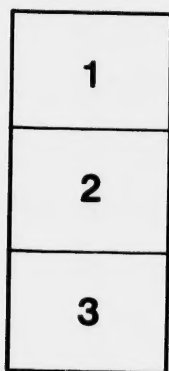
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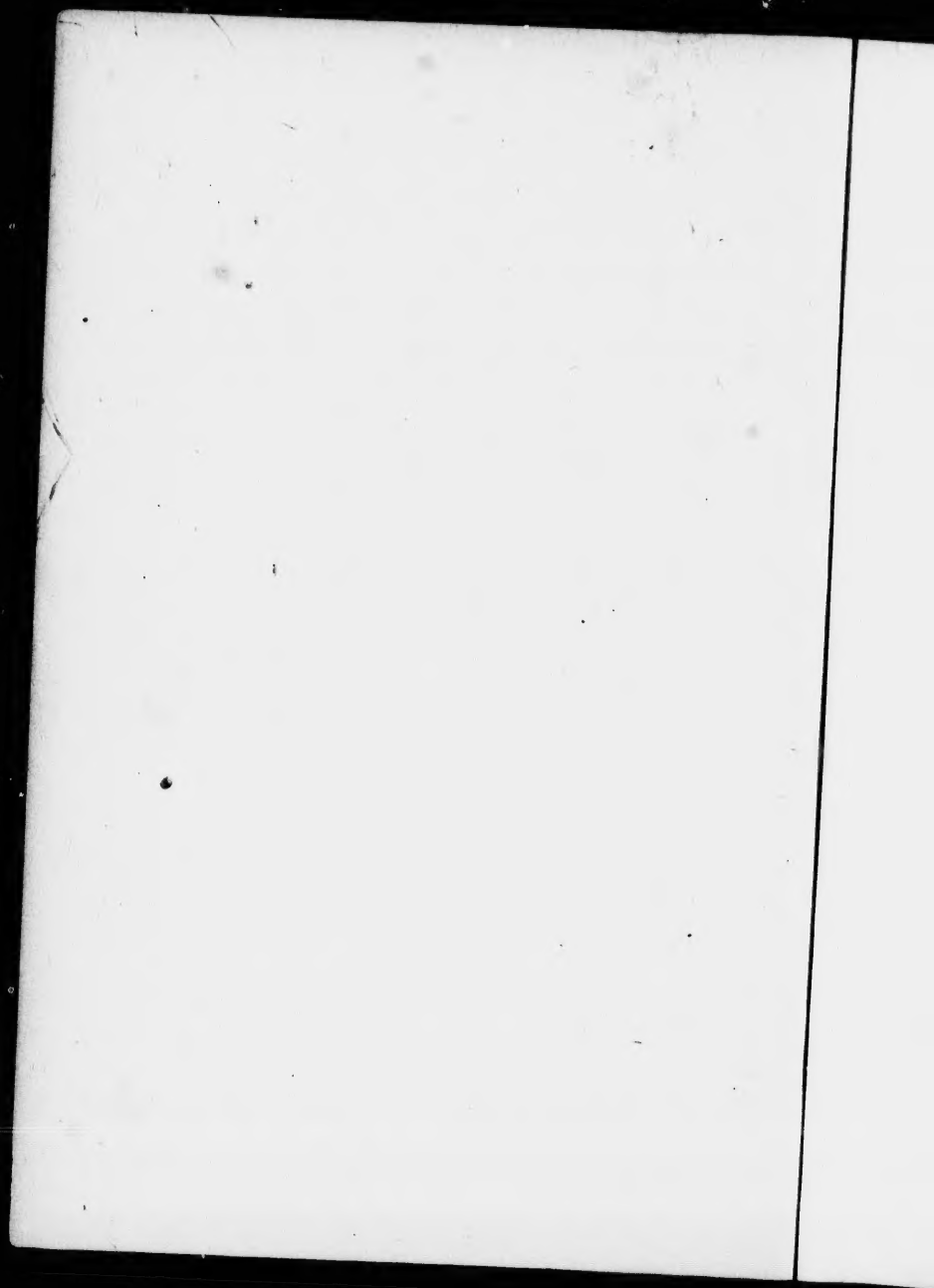
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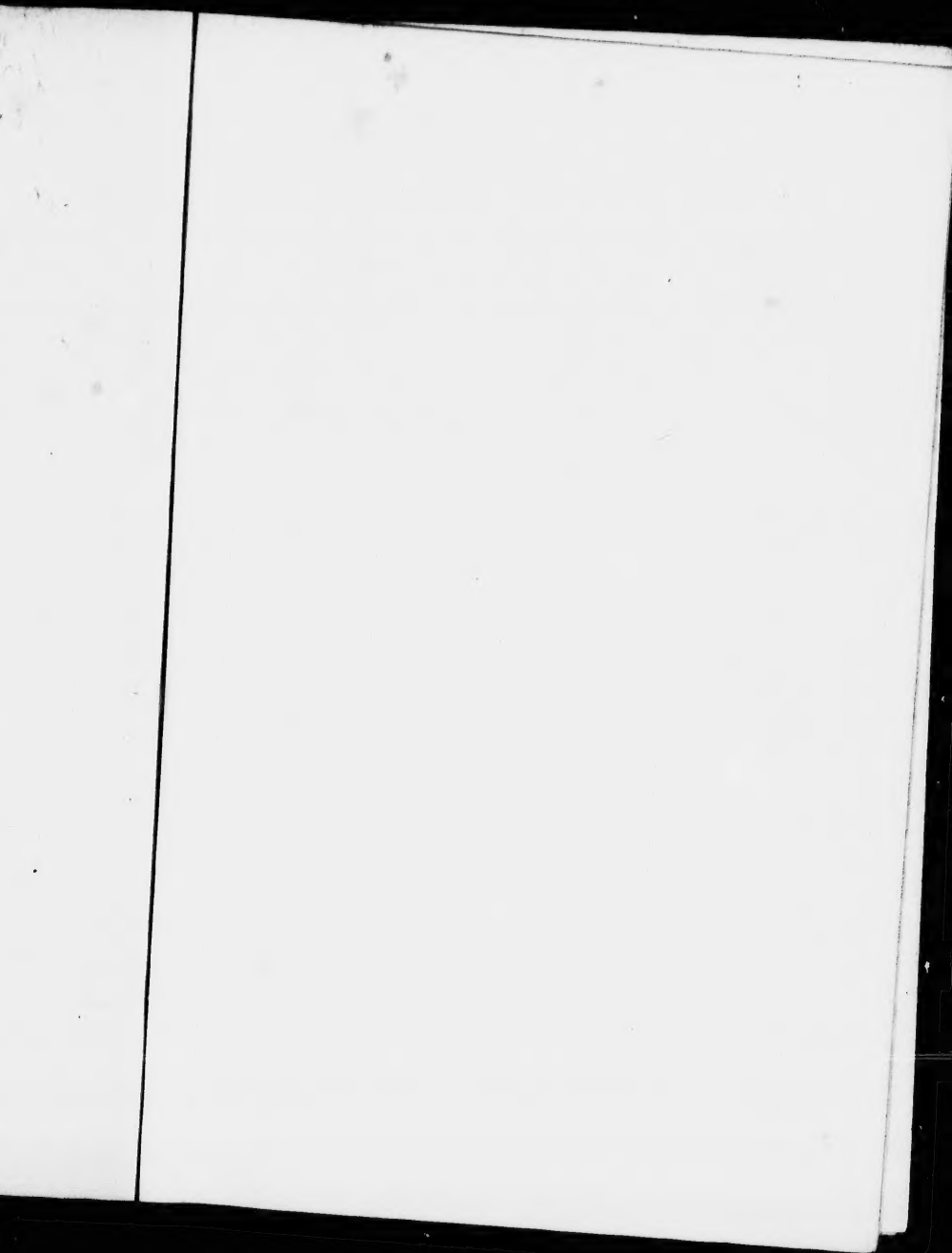
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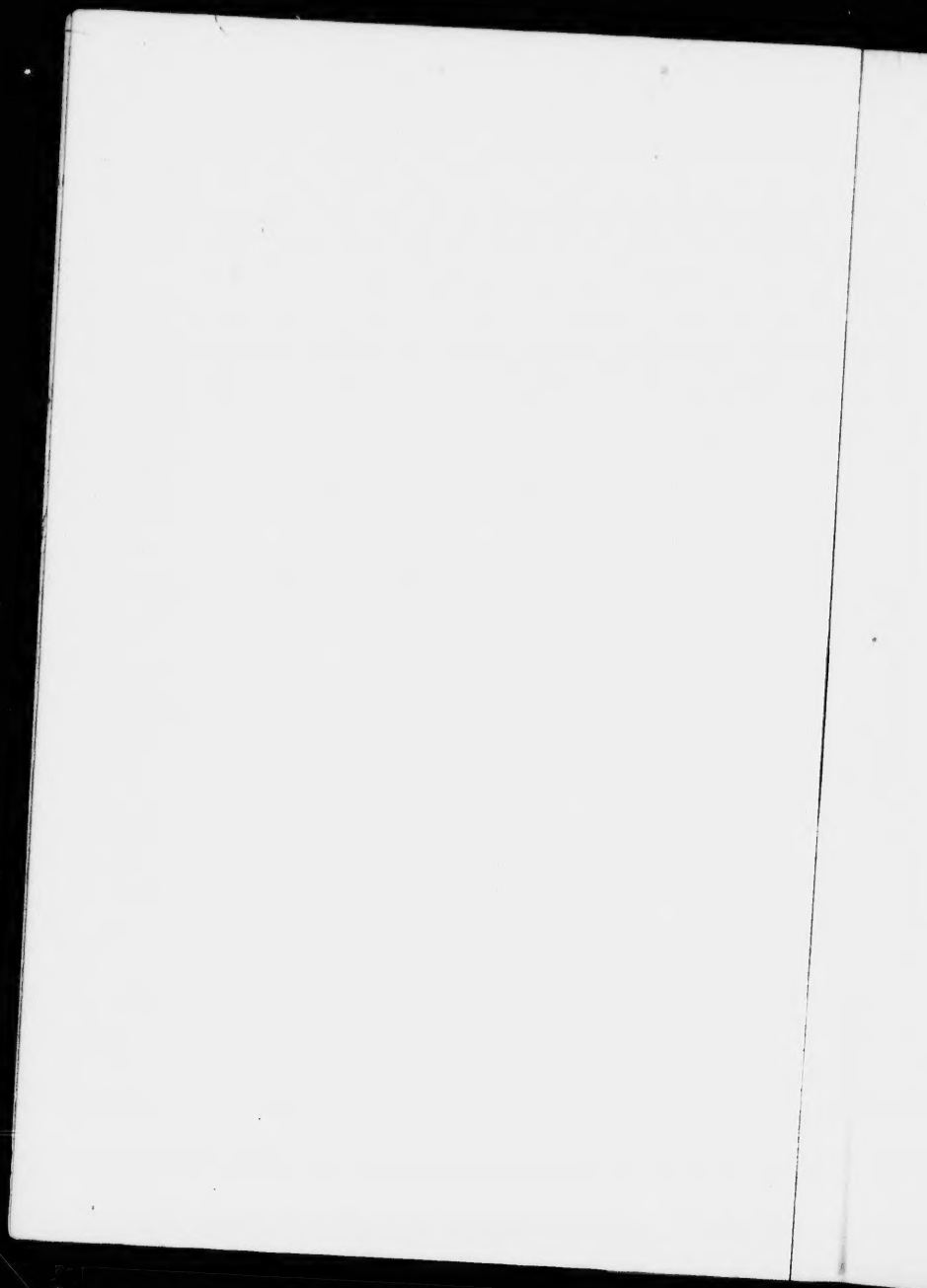
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MILDRED DROPPED THE LETTER WITHOUT A WORD. *Page 379.*

ONE COMMONPLACE DAY

BY

PANSY

AUTHOR OF "AN ENDLESS CHAIN," "MRS. SOLOMON SMITH LOOK-
ING ON," "CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS," "A HEDGE FENCE,"

"ESTER RIED YET SPEAKING," "THE HALL
IN THE GROVE," "CHAUTAUQUA GIRLS,"

"RUTH ERSKINE'S CROSSES,"

"THE MAN OF THE HOUSE,"

"INTERRUPTED,"

ETC., ETC.

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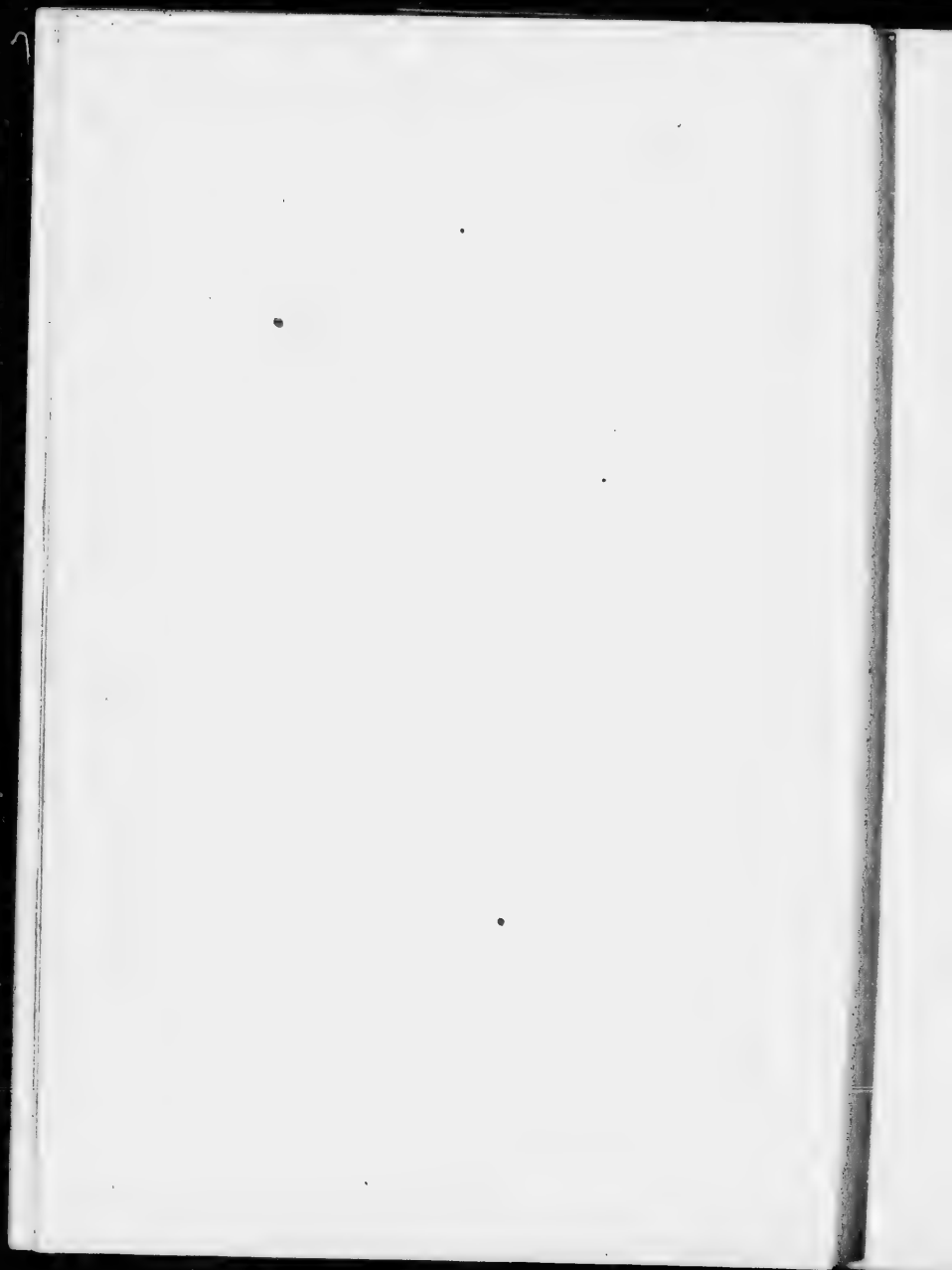
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ONE COMMONPLACE DAY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM MIDNIGHT TO SUNRISE.

THE great town clock, whose face showed in the moonlight from the tower of the church on the square, tolled twelve times and a new day was born. To all appearances it was exactly like other days that had preceded it. The streets were quiet, save for a comparatively few late walkers, who went swiftly about their business, making no stir and exciting no comment. The houses were for the most part dark and quiet, for this was a quiet town, which as a rule, hushed itself early for the night.

It is true that behind and above certain screened doors the light glowed brightly, but the owners took care not to let out-

siders see what was going on behind the screens. From here and there a house streamed the lights from many windows, and the laughter and chatter of guests sounded on the quiet air; and there were certain windows where the night-lamp of some anxious watcher burned dimly, but for the most part, the town was asleep.

Upstairs, in a back room, whose light could not be seen at all from the streets, a lamp was burning dimly, not because somebody had turned it low and shaded it, but because it had turned itself low for want of oil to feed upon, and because of a badly crusted wick. Of course it smoked.

Two people were in the room. One, a young fellow with brown eyes and thick, brown hair, through which he ran the fingers of one hand in an absent way, was sitting by the book-strewn table, bending over the open book which lay so that the dim rays from the dying lamp could best strike it. The other, a young fellow with blue eyes and curly hair, sat with his feet in the window and his hands in his pockets,

watching first the moon and then the student.

At last he spoke:

"I say, Ben, the clock has struck Thursday; you need not moon over that old book any longer. We'll have to get to bed by moonlight as it is; that light is departing. I wish it would go bodily while it's about it. Faugh! what a smell! If there is anything I hate it's kerosene oil."

The student did not even glance up, but turned a leaf of the big book with a smile as he said:

"You must have gas put in your house."

"I'm going to. Catch me blinking my eyes over smoky kerosene when I have a house of my own. It shall have all the modern improvements, and a great many that have not been discovered. Time enough for new ones before I build!" The sentence closed with a slight laugh, and there was silence again for a few minutes.

"There! What did I tell you? Now see if you will stop." This exclamation was called forth by the circumstance of

the light flickering unsteadily for a moment and then going out altogether.

The young man at the table closed his book, looked at his friend in the moonlight, and laughed.

"I should have had the facts all fixed in my mind in five minutes more," he said, "but there is no help for it now. I am sorry I used up all the light, old fellow."

"The moon gives light enough for me, and smells better besides; now that the soul of that thing has departed it smells worse than before. I'll smash that lamp some day, see if I don't! Why do they always give the vile thing to us, do you suppose? I should think it would do for Eames to trim his whiskers by, and tie a new style in his cravat; that is all he uses a lamp for. Look here, Ben, did you know it was after midnight?"

"I heard you say that a new day was born. I wonder what it will do for us!"

"Humph! Exactly what the other days have done. You'll keep your pen going scratch, scratch, all day, and I'll fly around

when the mails come in, and lounge between times, and yawn and wish it were night; and in the course of time night will come and you will pore over those books, and I will wait for you with exemplary patience and growl at that same lamp, the smell of which garnishes my speech at this moment; and at last the thing will take pity on me and go out—earlier than it did to-night, I hope—and this day will be done. Time is kind of a mean thing. A hundred years from now—what difference will it make, I wonder?"

A good deal according to the theories of some people. Lloyd, aren't you going on with your study?"

"I don't believe I am. What's the use? I can't accomplish anything tugging away here all alone; it would take a century to get ready to work at that rate. We might as well both give up. I don't believe we'll ever, either of us, be doctors; and the sooner we settle down to the commonplace, the better it will be for us."

"You're blue to-night," his friend said

quietly; "when the sun shines again your ambition will return."

"No, it won't; I'm tired of the sun; great red-faced fellow, shining on all sorts of people in the same way. No discrimination about him. Why hasn't he penetration enough to discover that we are unusual fellows, and ought to have had a lift sunward years ago?"

There was no answer to make to this absurdity save a laugh. Meanwhile preparations for rest had gone forward rapidly, and, as the two had worked hard all day, and were tired, beyond a few groans and sighs over the hardness and smallness of the pillows, talk was at an end, and the deep-toned breathing soon showed that part of the new day was to be spent in sleep.

That red-faced sun was at his post at the usual hour the next morning, and was shining brightly when the two friends met on the street corner. Eben Bruce had been gone from the room ten minutes before his companion had opened his eyes and this was therefore their first meeting for the day.

"There is something slightly different going to happen after all," Lloyd said, speaking satirically. "Have you received your invitation?"

"What; to the picnic? You don't consider that sufficiently unusual to be ruled out from the commonplace, I hope? This town runs to picnics, you know."

"But we don't run to them very often; at least you don't. The uncommon part of it is that you are going."

"I am going?"

"Am I the bearer of news? Haven't you heard of it? Good! I heard your superior officer remark, not half an hour ago, that he should send you off for an afternoon's holiday, since you hadn't been out of town this season. For himself, he considered picnics of all sorts a bore, and wouldn't be hired to go. He meant to take your place and send you; because, of course, a representative of the establishment must be there out of courtesy to the ladies. Now, I call that an almost sublime exhibition of unselfishness on his part! I hope you will conduct yourself with becoming gratitude and

humility when you are informed of the grace extended."

The young man addressed felt his cheeks glow, and knew that he almost involuntarily curled his lip. The position of second book-keeper was made very disagreeable to him because of the superior airs of the first book-keeper.

"I shall not go," he answered, haughtily, "so the self-denial on his part is uncalled for."

"Oh! but I would. What is the use of standing in your own light in order to quench him? He won't quench worth a cent, and the woods are bright, and the coffee will be hot, and the cream cold, and the ladies irresistible, in spite of Milligan's airs. I should by all means go."

"Are you to go?"

"Not I. The United States mail comes in with all the exasperating regularity of the sun, without the slightest regard to picnics or holidays, and I have no self-abnegating superior, who, with tears in his eyes, will put his hands on my shoulder, and say.

'My dear boy, by all means go and be happy; I will do your work for you.' Count your mercies, Eben; if you were a servant of our free and independent Government, you would have none to count."

"What about this picnic, anyway? Who was taken with the disease this time?"

"It is a sort of epidemic, as nearly as I understand; struck a dozen or more at once. It is intended as a tribute to the guest at the Cleveland homestead."

"What! the lecturer?"

"Aye; the man who has come here to rest, and get away from people, and they get up a picnic to rest him!" He paused here long enough to indulge in a hearty laugh. "But the gayest part of it is that the distinguished guest can't be present; it seems he has planned to be several hundred miles from here by to-morrow evening, to fulfil an appointment, and must leave on the morning express. So all they will have of him will be regrets on paper, and joy in his heart, no doubt. Still, it will be an enjoyable affair, I presume. There is a very pleas-

and company, and they go to the pleasantest place about here, I think. If you've never been to Crescent Falls it will pay you to go, just for the sake of enjoying them. I wish I could go, and we would stroll off together, and have a good time for once in our lives, unregaled by the odors of kerosene, or boiled lard, or any such thing."

This reference to the close proximity of the room in their boarding-house to the multifarious odors of the kitchen, set them both into a laugh, and then they separated, Eben Bruce walking away confirmed in his resolve to take no holiday that was almost thrust upon him to serve the whim of a disagreeable fellow-worker. Besides, who wanted to go to a picnic?

Meantime on the side piazza of the Cleveland homestead, two gentlemen sat under the shade of a spreading elm. The younger of the two held in his hand a railway time-card, and looked up from its perusal to speak with a positive air:

"It's of no use, Durant, you can't do it. If that change of time had not come in day

before yesterday, you would just make the connection at the N. Y. & P. Crossing, but as it is, you would have to lie over there and wait for the midnight train, which you can get by taking the seven-twenty from here in the evening. My friend, you are in for that picnic, and no help for it. I can not in conscience say that you had to go this morning to make your train, for, besides not being true, those railroad fellows will all know that it isn't, and that last, you know, is an unanswerable argument with a great many people in favor of honesty."

"But by this arrangement I can not reach Venango in time for my appointment!"

"That is true enough; you will have to telegraph that you have failed to make connection, and they must make the best of it. I am as sorry as possible; it is really my fault for not looking up the time-table before this late hour. I had no idea that they changed time so early in the season; but I have studied the matter now in all its bearings, and there is no possible way for you to reach the junction in time for the first

up train." Mr. Durant's face was clouded.

"I don't like it," said he after a troubled silence, "and I don't understand it. I thought this one of the most important of my appointments; the fact is, it took me half a day to plan so that I could give them one evening; and now to have it upset and a commonplace picnic put in its stead, seems strange treatment for a soldier, doesn't it? I wanted to be about my Master's business. I have no time for trifling."

"I am sorry," Mr. Cleveland said again, his face growing as grave as his friend's, "I feel that the blame rests with me, I should have been more careful; and I am sorry about this picnic, too; it was sprung upon me. I should have known better than to have dragged you into such a thing when you are tired out."

Mr. Durant hastened to disclaim any intention of censuring his host.

"The blunder is my own, of course. You could not be expected to study time-tables for your guests, and tell them when to start," he said, smiling. "I don't know what possessed

me to be so indifferent; it is not like me. As for this picnic, of course it is a pleasant thought, intended in kindness, and I ought to be grateful; in fact I am; only it seems, well, a little trivial, you know, when I have such important business on hand; but, after all, I may as well go and enjoy the woods, and make the best of it; perhaps it will fit me the better for my autumn work; who knows?"

Mr. Cleveland rose up from the discussion with a relieved air:

"Well," he said, "I must say I am glad for the picnic's sake; those people were going to be sadly disappointed to think that the lion of the occasion would not be there, after all. One can be sorry and glad at the same time, it seems. I would not have had you miss your appointment and set those Venango people to groaning for a great deal; but, since it can't be helped, I suppose we have a right to be glad that their loss is a gain to us. I must go and let Miss Hannah Wainwright know that you are to be at the picnic. It may turn the scales with her."

"Who is Miss Hannah Wainwright?"

"She is a very interesting and original character, who will bear studying; I will give you a chance to try it this afternoon, if she can be induced to go. She looks upon picnics somewhat as you do; but she is a staunch temperance woman, and believes in you; has read all your published lectures, and quotes you to the infinite discomfiture of your and her opponents often."

Now, Miss Hannah Wainwright was at this particular moment in her large, bright room upstairs, engaged in driving a hairpin through the neat wad of gray hair on the back of her head, and bending at the same moment over a book about three inches square, which was fastened open on her dressing-bureau with a collar-box and a hair brush. Her forehead was wrinkled, and her face wore an astonished, I might say disturbed, look.

"Well, I do say!" she said at last, speaking slowly, and with evident perplexity in the tone. "That's a verse, sure enough! It has enough in it to last a lifetime, instead of a day. Well, for the matter of that, it

must last a lifetime; and that doesn't make it easier. I don't know why I have never taken in that verse before. As many times as I have read it, too! It shows how like a machine being turned with a crank a body can read; for I suppose if I have seen that verse once, I have forty times."

The unruly hair was in order at last, and the small, neat linen collar pinned securely in place, and then Miss Hannah bent over the little book again, and gave undivided attention to the words, reading them aloud: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

"Daily food, I should think! It will take more than one day to digest that! I must say, I don't see how it is to be done, or how it can be done. More than that, I don't know what people have been about. It doesn't stand to reason that they have all been as stupid as I have, and lived half a lifetime without noticing it at all; and yet, as true as I am Hannah Wainwright, I don't know as I can think of one who is practising on it."

By this time her toilet was completed, her windows thrown open to let in the sweet, flower-scented air, and she went slowly down the long, wide, old-fashioned stairs, through the long, wide, old-fashioned hall, and threw open the door of her quaintly-furnished dining-room. The table was neatly laid for one, and glistened with china and shone with silver, and was beautiful with choice, fine drapery; Miss Hannah's breakfast table was always a picture pleasant to look at. Through the half-open door came a whiff of fragrant coffee, and, a hint of broiling steak.

"There it is!" said Miss Hannah, "whether ye eat or drink. How, I should like to know! To be sure, it will strengthen me for my day's work, I suppose, to eat my steak and drink my coffee; and I am thankful to God for the food to eat, and the pleasant place to eat it in; but how can I plan the day's work so as to match the directions?"

She went over to the piazza door and set it open, letting in a glow of sunlight and the breath of many flowers. There was Peter trundling his barrow down the pebbly path,

with its burden of dried leaves and cast-away blossoms. Peter was a faithful workman, but his pinched face this morning suddenly suggested to her the wonderment as to whether *his* eating and drinking could have anything to do with the glory of God. She had never noticed before that he did not look well-fed. She called to him:

"Good morning, Peter! Have you had your breakfast this morning?"

CHAPTER II.

MISS WAINWRIGHT'S "MUDDLE."

PETER stayed his wheelbarrow, and gazed at his mistress in astonishment.

"Why, yes'm," he said, at last, remembering to jerk off the ragged straw hat he wore. "I had it at the usual time, ma'am; a quarter before six."

His mistress could not keep back a little laugh over the astonishment in his face, but she pursued her investigation:

"Well, Peter, what did you have?"

And then Peter hesitated, placed his hat on his head, drew it down, indeed, so as to shade his face, then, suddenly recollecting, took it off again, his face very red. Meantime, Miss Hannah waited, regarding him with interest.

"Well, ma'am," he said at last, "to tell

the truth, it wasn't as big a breakfast as it might have been; not a square meal. You see we was a little short this morning, and I just took a bite to stay me, and left the rest for the young ones."

Miss Wainwright looked dismayed and bewildered.

"Do you really mean me to understand, Peter, that your family haven't suitable food and enough of it?"

"Generally speaking, we have, ma'am, but it is an uncommon short time with us just now. We have had sickness, and a doctor's bill to pay, and I had to lay off two days and a half to help take care of the boy, he was that bad, but he is gaining now, and we all had a bite, and I think our oldest boy will bring home some meal with him when he comes at noon. We've got much to be thankful for, ma'am; we didn't think at one time that the boy would pull through."

"I didn't know you had a sick boy; what did he have to eat this morning?"

"Why, the mother, she saved up a good

slice 'of bread for him, and toasted it, and Tommy he bought half a pint of milk from the milkman, and he said, the boy did, that he had a breakfast fit for a king; they all save up for him, ma'am; he's to have a baked potato for his dinner."

Miss Hannah turned suddenly, and went in at the kitchen door.

"Keziah," she said to the gay-turbaned colored woman, who stepped aside to let her pass, "cut a large piece of the steak, and pour a cup of coffee, and arrange things on the table by the window, and have Peter come in at once and eat a good breakfast, and fill the willow basket with whatever there is that will do for it—that cold chicken, and the bowl of broth, pour that into a tin pail, and put in bread, and a glass of grape jelly, and have Peter take it over to his house as soon as he has eaten his breakfast. Tell him I say he is to go at once, and don't forget the butter and a pail of milk."

"Whether ye eat or drink," she said to herself, as she went back to the dining-

room. "And here is a family near to starvation, may be under my very eyes. Sickness too! I am glad Peter has only been in my employ a few days. I should feel too ashamed to eat my breakfast if he had been working for me all summer, and I had not found out, though I don't know as I should have thought to inquire. Just as likely as not the family are in need of clothing. Of course they are; and they live at the foot of my lane, and I don't know a thing about them!"

Then she seated herself at her pretty dining-table, with a mental determination to step over to Peter's and see for herself at the first opportunity.

Keziah, as she made a journey to the dining-room with hot water for her mistress' coffee, having an eye to the saving of steps, asked a question: "Will we be putting up them lace curtains in the up-stairs room to-day?"

Miss Hannah regarded her with a bewildered air.

"There it is again," she said, at last. "I declare, now, if it isn't a puzzle!"

"Oh! here's nothing to puzzle a body; I can climb the step-ladder, and fix them as well as not."

Miss Wainwright laughed.

"It is a puzzle that refuses to be settled with hammer and tacks, and your skilful fingers," she said. "What have lace curtains in my spare bedroom to do with the glory of God, do you know, Keziah?"

"Ma'am?" said Keziah, in unbounded astonishment.

Her mistress laughed again—a laugh that had a note of trouble in it.

"There it is!" she said; "that is as much as I know about it. No; we'll let the curtains wait awhile; they may go up to-morrow and they may not. I don't see, for my part, how they are to be made to fit."

"They fit to an inch," said Keziah, with decision and an air of superior wisdom. "I measured them myself yesterday afternoon with the rule."

"But they've got to be measured by a rule in a little book upon my bureau; that's the trouble."

"Ma'am?" said Keziah again, and she wondered whether her mistress was suddenly losing her strong and active mind. Who ever heard of talk like this!

Miss Wainwright saw difficulties in the way of explaining herself more clearly, and therefore dismissed Keziah with another statement to the effect that the curtains were not to be touched for the present.

Her breakfast concluded, she still revolved in her mind the problem of life which had been sprung upon her that morning out of her little volume of "Daily Food."

Stepping to the front door, she set it open, and then wandered down to the front gate, stopping here and there to train a stray bush, or pick a bright flower. She reached the gate just in time to receive a greeting from one of her favorites, a young fellow, who thought he was studying law in an office down town. He stopped, his handsome eyes lighting with pleasure at sight of her, and held out his hand over the gate.

"Good-morning, auntie; how does life use you this morning?"

"Better than I use it; things are in a muddle."

"No! you don't say that you are muddled? That alarms me. I always have satisfaction in thinking of the straightforwardness with which you take up life. What has happened?"

Miss Wainwright looked with a dissatisfied air at the cigar which he had removed from his mouth.

"So you smoke," she said; "I didn't know it. Have the goodness to stand the other side of the breeze, will you? I like to keep control of my own throat, and I don't choose to choke it up with tobacco."

"I beg your pardon, auntie; I did not know that the odor of cigars was so disagreeable to you, or I would not have presumed to stop at your gate with one in my hand," and he tossed the offender into the road. "I don't think I ever heard you mention the matter before."

"There is no use in talking about smoky chimneys all the time; if they will smoke, about all you can do is to keep away from

them, if you haven't the power to right them. I know that *men* smoke, some of them, and I suppose they will continue to do so, for all me; but as for *liking* it, I can give you a bit of news young man, if you want it. No woman likes to have tobacco burned up, and puffed at her."

"I beg your pardon," the young man said again. "I did not notice that the wind was in your direction; you mustn't be too hard on me, though. I never smoke in the presence of ladies, nor in rooms which ladies frequent; I would not even smoke in your kitchen."

"No, I guess you wouldn't!" This with a positive setting of Miss Wainwright's firm mouth, and a decided shake of her head. "I keep control of my own house, you know, and smoky chimneys there are what I don't stand; neither the self-made kind, nor the imported ones; not but what I am willing to own that you are, probably, too much of a gentleman to try it. Some aren't, though. They haven't had your advantages in life. That Job Perkins, who cleaned out my cellar

last week. came puffing into my kitchen with a nasty pipe in his mouth, that smelled like a worn-out furnace. 'Bless me!' I said to him, 'there isn't a flue in my house that will work with that kind of smoke. You'll just have to go and puff it outside. Mother Nature has got to stand being poisoned, I suppose, but I won't.' He went away muttering that the quality who could afford high-priced cigars were allowed to smoke where they wanted to, without an everlasting fuss being made about it. He was mistaken, so far as that was concerned; but I suppose you belong to the 'quality' he spoke of, and smoke the high-priced cigars."

The handsome young fellow laughed pleasantly.

"That's just the point," he said gayly, "I do smoke first-class cigars, always; I will not use any others; and as for a pipe, I dislike it as much as you can. What connection there is between good cigars and Job Perkins' ill-smelling pipe, is more than I can imagine."

"I know it; Job Perkins is a brother of

yours, to be sure, according to the Bible, but then he's a miserable sort of a poor relation, who, as he says, cannot afford good cigars; and it ought to be nothing to him what you elegant gentlemen do. I don't suppose, if the truth were known, that Job ought to afford even his nasty pipe; but the idea of you 'quality' setting a good example for him to follow, is absurd, of course. He ought to have brains enough to know that he doesn't belong to the same world with your set."

"Auntie, what makes you so peppery this morning? I believe Jack Frost has nipped you. Did you know there was almost a frost last night? Please tell me what has occurred to put you in ill-humor with the world in general, and your worthless pupil in particular?"

"I am not in ill-humor with the *world*; I haven't thought of the world this morning. My puzzle has to do with those who have come out from the world and are separate, or who say they are; I'm one of them and you're another; you fit right into

the muddle, Charlie. For instance, now, what has that cigar smoke that you make a bellows of your mouth to puff out, to do with the glory of God?"

"What!" said the startled gentleman.

"Oh, yes, you may well be astonished; but the fact is, if you have a right to puff it, it ought to fit the pattern. 'Whether you eat or drink,' that's the rule; though, to be sure, smoking is neither eating nor drinking; what is it, anyway? Where can you classify it, intellectual, mental or moral? However, it is included, because you remember the next word, I suppose? 'Whatsoever ye do.' It would be rather difficult to slip away from that. Now, what I want to know is, 'How do you work in the smoking for the glory of God?'"

"Upon my word, auntie, I fail to see what you are driving at. So far as I know, smoking has never been extolled as one of the Christian virtues. I don't pretend that it is necessary to a full Christian development."

"I'm not talking about 'Christian devel-

opment,' nor 'Christian virtues,' nor any other phrase calculated to hide the plain truth. There's the rule, 'Do all to the glory of God.' Now, cigar smoke either fits in, or else it doesn't; and if it does, I am asking how?"

"But, aunt Hannah, there is no end to speculation, if you try to run on that line. The very puckers on your sleeve would have to be ripped up and looked into, if you narrowed things down to such a rule. How do they 'fit?' Come now!"

Miss Wainwright surveyed the innocent-looking little ruffles on her trim morning-dress, wearing meantime a grave, thoughtful face, but did not keep him waiting long for his answer.

"I don't know; ruffles and cigars occupy different positions, and one is *more* harmful, to say the least, than the other. But it is a fair question, and if it needs looking into, why, that is just what I have determined to do about things in general. It doesn't alter the argument one whit. If I spent, at the least calculation, twenty-five cents a

day, year in and year out, on *ruffles*, I venture that I should have looked into their merits before this time; but, as my *ruffles* are few and far between, the truth is, they have never taken much of either my money or my thought. I don't believe they are a nuisance to anybody; and they look neater than cigars, now, don't they? However, I am ready to study them, and if I find they don't fit, rip them off. Can you say as much for your side? What *are* the arguments for smoking? Is it necessary to your health? or does it keep you from looking odd, and so exciting comment? or do you smoke to encourage manufacture, and so help along industry? Those are some of the ideas advanced about *ruffles* and things, you know."

The young man laughed in a half-embarrassed manner.

"It is something that I never took the trouble to argue about," he said; "smoking is a luxury, I suppose; a harmless one, I think, and therefore I indulge."

"Then you don't pretend to do it for the glory of God?"

"Aunt Hannah, I beg your pardon for hinting it, but really that remark sounds a trifle irreverent to me."

"What does, Charlie, the talking about it, or the not living up to it?"

"Neither; the attempt to apply such solemn words to such trivial indulgences."

"My dear boy, how can I help that? I didn't make the application. '*Whatsoever ye do*' is the exact phrase. If the Bible is irreverent, I am surely not to blame for it."

"But, my dear Miss Wainwright, do you seriously think that the verse is to be applied to our every-day movements, as you seem to be doing?"

Miss Wainwright had wonderful, penetrating, gray eyes; at this point she levelled them at the young man before her, and gave him the benefit of their depth for a full minute without speaking; then she asked her next straightforward question:

"What does it mean?"

"Why, in my judgment, it refers in a general way, to our living consistent Chris-

tian lives, being careful to do nothing that will bring discredit on the cause."

"Why doesn't it say so, then?"

"Pardon me, but that is what I think it has done. It seems to me that such an interpretation as I have given is the only reasonable one."

"Is that the way in which you, with your present knowledge of language, would have written it? If you had prepared a communication for me, the object of which was to admonish me in a general way to be careful that I did nothing to bring discredit on your father's family, would you have written: 'Now, Miss Wainwright, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of our family?'"

"Aunt Hannah, you ought to have been a lawyer; you have a very skilful way of putting a fellow in a corner."

"I haven't put you in any corner; if you are there, you have yourself to thank for it; I should advise you to review your study of logic before you write a commentary on the Bible. It looks as plain to me as that two

and two make four; there is the direction from the One whom we acknowledge has a right to direct us and our business is to fit our lives to it."

"Good-morning, Mr. Cleveland," and Miss Wainwright's hand was held out cordially to the new-comer.

He declined her invitation to enter the house, and made known his errand briefly. The popular temperance orator, who had been resting with him for a day or two, and who had expected to leave that morning, was unable to make connections Westward, and, therefore, contrary to the reports which had been circulated, would attend the picnic, which had been gotten up to do him honor. The question was, would Miss Wainwright go?

"I'm interested in that question," young Lambert said, leaning over the gate, and regarding the lady with mischievous eyes. "I am anxious to know if a picnic can be made to fit your new rule."

"The rule isn't *new*, Charlie, it is eighteen hundred years old: and of course you ought

to be interested; if a picnic doesn't fit, we are bound, you and I, to have nothing to do with it. I'm not sure whether it does or doesn't."

Mr. Cleveland regarded them both with curious eyes.

"May I be permitted to know what particular rule is to be fitted to this picnic?" he asked at last.

Miss Wainwright's answer was prompt:

"It isn't the *rule* that is to be fitted to the picnic, but the picnic that is to be fitted to the rule, though I guess you have solved some of my difficulties. I shouldn't wonder if that were what is the matter with people; they have been at work trying to fit the rule to their actions, instead of making their actions match the rule. Why, it is the old story, Mr. Cleveland, you are acquainted with it, 'Whatsoever ye do,' you know, 'do all to His glory.' Charlie is exercised as to whether the picnic can be made to glorify Him. I don't know whether it can or not, do you?"

The gleam in Mr. Cleveland's eyes would have told a close observer that he understood

the language which the lady was speaking; he glanced from her to the young man, a touch of surprise in his face; could his thoughts have been read, they would have been something like this:

"Charlie Lambert troubled with such questionings! There must be more to the young fellow than I had supposed. Perhaps he is the very helper we need."

CHAPTER III.

STEP BY STEP.

THEN he answered Miss Wainwright's questioning eyes. "I understand. I can see ways in which picnics might fit; can not you? Do not the workers in the vineyard need occasionally, between seed-time and harvest, just the rest and refreshment which the putting off of care, and in a certain sense of responsibility, and the giving themselves up to a day of out-door social pleasures, gives?"

"The workers? Yes, I think more than likely they do. I shouldn't wonder if it would do you, and Mr. Durant, and Doctor Brandon, and two or three others whom I can think of, a world of good. But what about me? I don't believe I need such rest at all. I haven't been doing the sort

of work which requires that kind of rest. In fact I'm not tired. I never felt stronger in my life. Ready for anything. Why should I go and waste a day in the woods?"

Mr. Cleveland smiled brightly; the breezy energy with which she spoke seemed to give him new courage.

"Good!" he said. "It rests me to find one who isn't tired. As to the picnic; how do I know what your work is? If you are to go—and the Lord will tell you whether that is the way to spend the afternoon or not—he certainly has something for you to say or do for somebody—a word, or a deed, or a look. How can we tell beforehand what it is? Can't we trust him to point out the way, step by step?"

A softened look came in the clear, gray eyes. Miss Wainwright looked off at the hills in the distance, her whole face taking a restful expression of humble trust.

"Thank you," she said, at last, turning back to Mr. Cleveland, "you have given me a lift. 'Step by step.' That is what I

haven't been much given to doing. I've planned the way weeks beforehand, and strained every nerve to walk in the path of my own planning. I shouldn't be surprised if I didn't do a thing this day that was planned out for it a week ago. I said I wasn't going to waste my time at a picnic; and I feel, now, as though I might very likely go. I can't tell yet. You are going, Charlie, I suppose? What are you going to do about it after you get there? That's the question. You don't know, do you? Neither do I. But if we both go, intending to do the thing that *He* says do next, I suppose it will all be right. Only there's this about it, I should think we would both need to watch that we did not do the things which He has explicitly told us not to do."

The gentlemen lifted their hats in farewell a moment afterward, and passed down the road together.

"A grand woman, that!" Mr. Cleveland said, and the younger gentleman made answer:

"A queer woman as one will find in a lifetime! Grand? Yes; I suppose she is in a way."

And then they reached the corner and their ways separated, of which fact Mr. Charlie Lambert was glad. He drew a long breath, as one who had breathed an atmosphere that was too bracing for him. In truth, he felt as though he wanted no more of that sort of thing just at present.

Upstairs, in Fannie Copeland's room, the girls were making their beds and frolicking. I think the frolic progressed more rapidly than the bed-making. They were not very old young ladies, and they were very warm friends, and had been separated for three months and thirteen days, and this was their first morning together. They felt wild. Their frolic took the undignified and very enjoyable form of a pillow fight. And the peals of laughter which constantly issued from their room let everybody in the house know how thoroughly the fun was being enjoyed.

"Just hear those girls!" Mrs. Copeland

said, as she went about her neat dining-room; and she smiled in appreciation of their glee.

Mildred, the guest, was the first to rally from the spell, and brush back her disorderly hair and say:

"Frances Copeland, what would your mother think if she could see this room? She will believe that a real hoyden has come to visit you."

"Fancy Mildred Powers being sat down as a hoyden!" laughed Fannie, breathless with fun and the effect of the last pillow. "My mother isn't easily disturbed, my child. She has had me for her daughter too long for that. She is just the nicest mother a girl ever had, anyway."

"Except mine," Mildred said, with the look on her face that one likes to see a girl wear when she speaks of her mother.

Fannie laughed, lightly.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I must except your mother, of course. I know she must be ever so nice, on account of her daughter. But Mildred, really and truly, I have seen

a great many mothers whom I wouldn't have had for mine under any consideration whatever. I do feel so sorry for girls, sometimes, just because of their mothers."

It was Mildred's turn to laugh.

That is just one of your queer ideas, Fannie Copeland. I don't suppose there is a girl in the world who would exchange her mother for yours or mine for anything. All girls think their mothers are splendid."

Fannie shook her head.

"Don't you believe it," she said, with an air of wisdom. "You can't have seen as many different types of mother as I have, or you would know better. There's a girl here, Laura Milroy, her name is, if her mother were mine I should run away, and sometimes I think Laura would like to."

At that moment a clear voice called from the hall below:

"Fannie!"

"There!" said Mildred, "she has heard our uproar, and has come to quench us."

But Fannie went away with a bright

face, in no wise concerned. In a moment she was back.

"Where is my pin, Mildred, do you see it anywhere? It is a call; must be on business so early in the morning. Charlie Lambert; I've never told you about him, have I? Well, there isn't much to tell; he is a good-hearted young fellow, who studies some, and lounges some, and smokes some, and is handy to have around. If he has come to call, Milly, I'll come back for you," and she hurriedly smoothed her rumpled hair, set her collar straight and departed.

When she came again her face was bright.

"It is an invitation, Mildred; a picnic at the falls; just a perfect day for it. I accepted for you at once. I wasn't going to give you a chance to refuse. Oh! you good, naughty girl, you have finished the bed, haven't you, and straightened the bureau? I am real glad about this picnic; it will give me a chance to introduce you to all the girls. And Charlie Lambert is a good one to go with; he doesn't hover around

one all the time, but gives you a chance to enjoy other people a little. The falls are just lovely, Mildred. Don't you know I told you about going there last summer, and having such a delightful time? I haven't been since."

A good deal of talk followed as to hours and plans. The picnic grounds were ten miles away, but were reached by steam-cars, which left the depot promptly at two o'clock.

"Charlie warned me that if we were tardy, it would be a hopeless case, for there isn't another train up that will stop at the falls until seven."

"What sort of a person is this Charlie, Fannie?"

"Oh! why, I told you; good and nice; like one's brother, you know, only I shouldn't care to have a brother just like him."

"Why not?"

"How can I tell? Just because I wouldn't. I should be as particular about brothers as I am about mothers. I'm always glad that my only brother is five years younger than

I am, because I can bring him up to suit me. Charlie is a law student; at least he is in Judge Marley's office. It seems as though he went to too many picnics and things to study much. Not that he is wild; I don't mean that. He has very good morals. Why, he is a member of the church; not that that amounts to much with him."

"He must be a rather remarkable person. He has all the virtues, and is a good fellow, and doesn't amount to much in any way!"

Fannie laughed.

"I am giving you a wrong impression. I don't know how to describe people; but there really isn't a great deal about Charlie to describe. He is just a good enough boy, and that is about all."

"What do you mean by saying that his being a member of the church did not amount to much?"

"I don't know quite what I did mean. Only we have our ideals of things, you know. I have always thought that if I were a church-member I should like to be a real

thorough-going one; act as though it meant something of great importance, and be different in every way. I dare say I should not; I should be like every one else, probably. But one thinks more of these things in a man than even in a woman. There is occasionally a man, you know, who acts as though his church and his religion were the most important matters in life to him, and I think it is rather becoming—"

"And this Mr. Lambert doesn't impress you in any such way?"

"Oh! Charlie, he is of another type altogether. He never does anything particularly wrong, I guess; but you don't get an impression that it is because of his religion. He never goes to prayer-meeting. He is too busy, I believe; has to study evenings or stay in the office; but then there are numberless other evenings when he doesn't seem to have to do any such thing. He is in a Bible-class; is one of Miss Wainwright's young men, and she is always chasing him up to see why he wasn't there last Sunday. But he is kind-hearted and gentlemanly, and

always ready and willing to do one a favor.

"There's mamma's voice calling me again. I think she wants to plan about our lunch for this afternoon; will you come down with me, Mildred, or will you wait here till I come back?"

Mildred chose to stay; and the moment she was alone, she drew from a snug corner of her trunk a medium-sized, handsomely bound Bible, and sat down with thoughtful face beside the open window. Yet the reading did not seem to hold her thoughts; she turned the leaves absently, not as one who was really looking for any particular place, but as one whose attention was pre-occupied. She settled where to read, at last; but with a single verse, her eyes roved outside the window. Something had set Mildred Powers into a quieter mood than that which had possessed her during the pillow fight. As you looked at her now, you would have decided that the quiet mood became her best; perhaps, was more habitual to her. It was a sweet, young face, with fair hair and bright brown eyes,

large and thoughtful looking. You would not have thought her more than seventeen, though in reality she had just passed her eighteenth birthday. The extreme simplicity of her morning dress possibly gave one a better opportunity to note its exquisite fit to a graceful form; and also to notice how exactly it harmonized with a somewhat trying complexion. Somebody made a study of dress for Mildred Powers; sufficiently at least to have her select that which best suited her. Yet the whole effect was such as to impress a looker-on with the feeling that, once selected and made, her dress commanded very little more attention from its wearer. I am not sure that the face of the wearer was one easy to read. There was power in it, certainly; but of just what sort, or whether it had not been sufficiently called out by circumstances for any one to be sure of it as yet, was a question. She was a girl who exerted more or less influence over her friends without being aware that she did so. Fannie Copeland, on the other hand, was perfectly well

aware that she was a power in every direction in which she chose to exert herself. She knew that this dear friend of hers leaned on her, depended on her judgment, was swayed by her movements; she had not discovered that she herself was ever swayed by Mildred. Before three verses of the chapter had been read, Fannie's quick step was heard on the stair again. It was an involuntary action of Mildred's to thrust the handsome Bible suddenly out of sight under the folds of a crimson shawl that lay on the couch beside her. She could not have told why she did so; she would have been a little ashamed to try to tell. There was an instinctive feeling that it would seem strange to Fannie to find her reading in the Bible. Fannie's face was clouded, and the tones of her voice had undergone a change.

"Mamma wants us to take Kate with us," she said at last, feeling that Mildred's eyes questioned her changed mood.

"Kate! why, how can we?"

"That is just what I asked mamma; but she doesn't seem to realize the difficulties.

Mothers do have peculiar ideas sometimes."

"Fannie, I beg your pardon, I did not mean to call your mother's judgment in question. I only meant that I thought we were ourselves guests and not at liberty to invite others."

"As to that," said Fannie, ashamed of the position in which she was placing her mother, "it is a sort of town affair, you know; that is, it is a temperance picnic, and invitations have been issued in the papers for all to go who choose to buy tickets."

"Oh! I didn't understand; why, then, there is no difficulty in the way; Kate is as much invited as we are."

"That is what I tell mamma; and at liberty to go if she wishes, without our taking her under our protection; but mamma says she is timid, and feels that she doesn't know the girls very well, and she is sure she will not go unless we ask her to walk along with us, and look after her a little."

"Well, why not? We could easily manage that, since there are four of us; you

could walk with your friend, and Kate and I would keep right at your heels."

Mildred's voice was merry, and her face without a cloud; apparently nothing in the prospect troubled her. But Fannie's face did not clear.

"I should be very likely to allow that!" she said, in a tone which was divided between vexation and indignation.

"It is a real nuisance! I don't know why mamma can't see that it would just spoil our pleasure. If I had thought I were going to be tried in this way, I should never have coaxed to have Kate come here."

"But Fannie, what harm will it do? I really and truly would just as soon walk to the depot with Kate as not. I like her face ever so much. And if your gentleman friend does not like it, he need have nothing to do with her. It was you he invited, for I suppose he did not even know I was here; so he will have the company he planned for, and everything will be nice."

Fannie shook herself with increasing impatience, and twitched about the hair she

was trying to rearrange, so that in revenge it tumbled recklessly in pretty brown waves to her waist.

"Now see what I have done! Here is a good half-hour of work, and I thought my hair was put away for the day. It isn't that, Mildred; I don't care two straws what Charlie Lambert likes or doesn't like. We should get along well enough going to the depot; but it will just make embarrassment the whole time. Introductions, you know, and having her waited on; it is to be a basket picnic, and particular friends will gather in groups, and she will have to be one of our group, of course, and it will just be disagreeable all the time. If mamma were a young girl, she would see how it is. You needn't look at me out of your great eyes, Mildred Powers; I know you think I am silly, and I suppose I am; but I cannot make the world over, and I don't want to try. I am well enough suited with it as it is; if I could only be let alone in it."

CHAPTER IV.

THINGS HARD TO EXPLAIN.

MILDRED'S eyes grew thoughtful. This was a new phase of life to her, and must be studied.

"But Fannie," she said, again, "I don't think I understand. I am a stranger, and will have to be introduced. Does that seem a trial to you?"

Fannie laughed, though there was not much sound of mirth in the laughter.

"I don't believe you are such a little goose as you pretend," she said. "Why can't you understand, by instinct, what is beyond my powers of explanation, Kate is all very well, and I like her, and am glad she has a chance to stay in a respectable home. I am glad, for her sake and for mine. If she were not here to wash the

dishes and set the tables, I should have it all to do. I don't respect her any less because she is at work for her board; in fact I think a great deal more of her than I should if she had been willing to fold her hands at home and cry over her misery. But there are people in the world who do not feel so; and if your big eyes have not found that out before, it is time they did. I know as well as I want to know, that there will be people at that picnic to-day who would not speak to Kate if I introduced her; and others who would speak so coldly, that if I were the victim I would rather they would not speak at all; and others who will be pleasant enough to her face, but who will say, at the first opportunity, that it was 'rather queer in Fannie Copeland to thrust that Hartzell girl into the company—she doesn't belong to our set!' And I know just how they will curl their noses all up in little wrinkles. I tell you I hate to go through with it. What is the use in pretending ignorance? You know, just as well I do, that to introduce Kate

Hartzell, who washes dishes for her board in my mother's kitchen, and to introduce Mildred Powers, whose father was Judge Powers, of Washington, are two different things."

"Yes," said Mildred, slowly, her fair cheeks flushing a little, "I can see how a thing of this sort might be hard under certain circumstances — that is, for me. I shouldn't think it would be for you, Fannie; you seem to have more independence of character than most girls. But, then if your mother wishes it" —

"Yes," said Fannie, decidedly, "she wishes it — thinks I owe it to Kate to show her so much kindness; and I shall do it, I suppose, or do at it; but I don't pretend to be independent — not about such things, at least. I don't like it at all, and I see endless embarrassments in the way. I wish the day were done."

And now I really hope that I have succeeded in introducing to your notice the various persons who attended that picnic on

that October afternoon. I mean the persons in whom you are requested to be especially interested. Those who went were really numbered by the hundreds, and some of them you will doubtless meet more or less frequently. But these few whom I have selected from the crowd had their life-story curiously interwoven that afternoon, and none of them were less aware of it than the parties themselves.

The day was a perfect autumn one—crisp, you will remember, in the morning; bright and cool all day, though not too cool for the fairest of summer dresses—pure white. The picnic party reveled in them that day—the more lavishly, perhaps, because the autumn leaves with which many of them were glorified said that the time of such attire was short. The days were hastening when the gray old earth would assert her claim to white robes, and bury the autumn leaves so deep that they would lose their glorious tints and crumble into dust.

The party from the Copeland home had managed the preliminaries fairly well, and

succeeded in reaching the picnic ground in an amicable state of mind. Mildred was dressed, and waiting in the neat little parlor, when Charlie Lambert arrived. It was Mrs. Copeland who had introduced the two, but it was Fannie Copeland who had gayly explained to the gentleman in the morning just who her guest was.

"She is Judge Powers' daughter; yes, I mean the great Judge Powers of Washington. You didn't know his daughter was my best friend at school, did you? Perhaps I'll be a lawyer, first, Charlie Lambert. She ought to have inherited some of her father's knowledge. She has his ponderous old books stored in the room next to hers, and goes there, sometimes, to cry over them and wish she could see him studying them again. She told me all about it. She almost worshipped her father. No, she is the only child—the son died, I believe. I know Mildred had a brother, but he must have died when he was a child. You ought to feel yourself highly honored. You will be the first of my friends to meet her."

So Charlie presented himself in due time in careful costume prepared to do honor to the honor bestowed on him. Mildred, in white robes and blue ribbons, looked fair enough for the perfect day; and they sat and chatted, the gentleman in no wise disturbed that Fannie was tardy in making her appearance. When, during the next few minutes, Kate came into the room, sent by Fannie to ask some important question of Mildred, it was Mildred's quiet voice who said, "Mr. Lambert, Miss Hartzell," and Kate bowed quietly, and, in her freshly laundered dress, looked pretty enough for the occasion. What mattered it that the dress was only an eight-cent print? The tiny blue dots sprinkled all over it, seemed to make the white of the groundwork gleam whiter still. It was made with the neatness and care which some girls bestow on costlier fabrics, and became her well. Certainly Charlie Lambert neither knew nor cared that it was not such a dress as the most of his set would approve. He did not know who she was. I do not think it would have

made the least difference with his bow if he had known; there were some things about which Charlie Lambert was not silly. The walk to the depot was also pleasantly accomplished. Mildred linked her arm in Kate's before they were fairly off the piazza, leaving Charlie free to bestow his attentions on Fannie. By this arrangement he could carry on a bantering conversation with Fannie in the effervescent way in which he was apt to converse, and draw Mildred constantly into the talk by appealing to her for advice or confirmation. It did not in the least disturb him that there was another "nice"-looking girl added to his company. He did not trouble himself to inquire who her father was, or where she came from. It was enough that she was pretty and neat and knew how to put in a bright word occasionally, though for the most part Kate maintained a discreet silence. She was on new ground and meant to feel her way. It was between four and five o'clock that, by a sort of common consent, the large company of pleasure-seekers who thronged

the grounds that day began to gather in little congenial groups and dispose themselves comfortably to enjoy the collation. Baskets were being opened, and delicate sandwiches and puffy biscuits and plates of chicken and jars of pickles began to make their appearance. Circling under the branches of one of the largest old trees that crowned the cliff, in convenient nearness to one of the great flat stones which was to do duty as a table, gathered a group, which, partly by accident and partly by design, were to make one circle during refreshments. The central figure was Mr. Durant, the gentleman in whose honor the picnic first had its birth. He was a fine-looking, well-built man, hardly having reached the prime of life as yet; indeed, there were constantly conflicting opinions as to his age; some asserting that he could not be thirty yet, and others equally certain that he was at least thirty-five. However that might be, he was undoubtedly a man fitted to command attention, even though he had not been known as one who drew crowded houses night after

night on his favorite theme. The people of Eastwood had never been so fortunate as to hear him speak, but they had heard of him, and considered their town highly honored in having him as its guest for two days of his vacation. Mr. Cleveland, his friend and host, who sat just opposite him, leaning one arm on the stone table at his left, deserves more of an introduction than he has received. The truth is, Eastwood itself was not very well acquainted with Mr. Cleveland. He was comparatively a new-comer. He had bought a fine old place just in the outskirts of the town, had made certain much-needed improvements in it, and had settled his mother there as its mistress, and seemed to make it his headquarters. Eastwood was divided as to what Mr. Cleveland's business was. Some believed that he was a travelling salesman for a wholesale house in Boston, others that he had an interest in certain iron mines in the western part of the country, and still others thought that he was a gentleman of leisure, and travelled for pleasure and improvement. However that may be,

he certainly travelled a great deal; not having spent two consecutive weeks in his new home since he moved to it in the spring. The verdict of society at Eastwood was that he was fine-looking, well-educated, probably aristocratic and a trifle exclusive. If Fannie Copeland had told all which was passing in her mind in the morning, she would have admitted that it was this gentleman's opinion of her attempt at mixing society by bringing Kate Hartzell in her train, which had troubled her. She had met Mr. Cleveland and admired his fine eyes, and grave smile, as did most of the other young ladies, and had a general desire to stand well in his estimation. It would be a trial to her to have him think that "Old Hartzell's" daughter was her friend and companion.

She sat quite near to him at this moment, and he had just plucked the daintiest little fern, and passed it to her, with a remark on its delicate veining, and a hint that it contrasted well with the autumn leaves at her breast, and she, with a little

flush on her face had added it to the bouquet, and felt improved in every way.

Miss Hannah Wainwright was also of this company and sat bolt upright on an uncompromising stump, without the aid of supporting branches. She had really been the first to seat herself, and the company had gradually gathered about her.

Mr. Cleveland sauntering along the stream with his friend, had spied her, and said :

"Durant, let us take a seat up there, and wait for supper; I see my friend, Miss Wainwright, has settled herself as though she meant to stay for some time, and I want you to hear her talk."

A moment after came Charlie Lambert, springing skilfully over a fallen tree that impeded his path, and making a passable following for Annie Copeland.

"Let's go up there," he said, "they are getting ready for supper, and if there is anything better in a crowd than Auntie Wainwright can produce out of her great brown basket, I shall be astonished. You

never tasted such sandwiches as she can make, Miss Powers."

He had glanced, as he spoke, at the couple coming more slowly behind them. It was Mildred and Lloyd McLean. He had come to the picnic after all.

"It was an accident," he said, laughing, coming up panting, and swinging himself on the train after it was in motion, stopping before Charlie Lambert as the first one whom he recognized. "Where is Bruce? Have you seen anything of him? I told him I wasn't going, and at the eleventh hour, I found that two of the clerks, who expected to be away, had changed their plans, so that gave me my freedom. Who all are here? I have made no plans, and have no friends; somebody will have to take me in. I am afraid Bruce did not go; he said he wouldn't; but I could have coaxed him into it if I could have found him. How do you do, Miss Copeland? Can't you take pity on the unfortunate, and smuggle me into some circle? I don't belong anywhere."

He looked bright enough, and fascinating enough to belong anywhere. Fannie, to whom a new face was pleasant, and who had known Charlie Lambert all her life, would have had not the slightest objection to making a place beside herself for him if it could have been done, but Mildred had taken the lead the moment they boarded the train, motioning Kate to the seat by the window, and taking the vacant one beside her. They were just ahead of her now, and Mildred was talking in an animated tone, and Kate was listening, her face bright with pleasure. It was certainly very kind in Mildred to take so much pains for Kate Hartzell.

Lloyd McLean's eyes followed hers, and wondered who the two were. He determined to learn, if he could.

"Lambert, where is somebody to introduce me to? I don't see a person in this car, save yourself and Miss Copeland, with whom I am sufficiently acquainted to speak. I shall have to throw myself off the train if there is no place where I will fit in."

Fannie Copeland laughed, and resolved to keep this merry young man in their train if she could.

"I will introduce you," she said, leaning forward, "to my friend, Miss Powers, of Washington, Mr. McLean."

Mildred turned and gave her hand and her smile of greeting, and Mr. McLean, bowing his thanks, accepted the arm of Lambert's seat, in lieu of a vacancy, and proceeded to make himself as entertaining as he could to this rarely pretty face. But Mildred had another introduction to make.

"Let me introduce Miss Hartzell, Mr. McLean."

Fannie, listening, felt her face clouding a little. Why need Mildred introduce her to everybody? She surely could not expect that; and Mr. McLean was a stranger. He might not like such general introductions.

Charlie Lambert saw the shadowed face, and searched for the cause.

"By the way, Fannie, who is that pretty little party with your friend? Her face

looks rather familiar, but I can not recollect having seen her before?"

Fannie's lip curled a little; she could not help it; she was a good deal tried.

"You may have seen her a hundred times, but I don't suppose you recognized her as an acquaintance. If Mildred introduced you, too, I should have thought you would have noticed the name."

"The name! Why, what has that—Hartzell—why, Fannie, she has nothing in common with Old Hartzell down on the Flats, I suppose?"

"You are certainly justified in supposing so, but for all that she is his daughter."

"Not old Joe Hartzell's daughter!"

"Yes, just that."

Charlie Lambert was a very well-bred young man; he paid some attention to the customs of polite society, and always wore faultless cravats, of just the right shade, and was careful about his gloves, and his perfumes, and a dozen other little things; nevertheless, he forgot himself, and gave vent to a whistle. A low one, cut short

suddenly; Fannie heard it, and it represented to her something of what society would think of her if she had introduced Old Joe Hartzell's daughter to it.

Young Lambert hastened to recover himself.

"It doesn't seem possible that such a pretty, ladylike-looking girl can be a relative of that set. Where did you pick her up, Fannie?"

"I didn't pick her up. Mother became interested in her because she seemed to try to learn her lesson in Sabbath-school, and was quick to take a hint. She was sorry for her, and made up her mind to try to help her. She is living at our house now, working for her board. She is a nice, good girl."

Fannie hurried through the story, her color deepening as she talked. Kate should have utmost justice at her hands, but it was hard to think that she must introduce her.

CHAPTER V.

SOCIETY CIRCLES.

AH," Charlie said, "a case of benevolence? Well, she is certainly a nice-looking little girl; one wouldn't dream of her antecedents."

His gracious tone said that Fannie's mother was to be commended for a kind act; and then he dismissed Kate Hartzell from his mind. That she had anything whatever to do with his conscience was an idea which had not for a moment entered his mind. What was Old Joe Hartzell's daughter to him?

All this time the group under the spreading tree are waiting for their supper. But the digression describes, among other things, how Lloyd McLean chances to be the companion of Mildred Powers. He found her

pleasant company, and, in a sense, attached himself to her. Not that he was disagreeably or exclusively attentive. When the train reached the picnic grounds he found plenty of friends, but it suited his mood to hover near the party which he had first joined, and to bestow more or less attention on Mildred and Kate Hartzell. He had not discovered who Kate Hartzell was. If he gave her any thought at all, he supposed her to be a guest at the Copelands.

"Is that lady aunt to all this company?" This was Mildred's somewhat astonished question in answer to young Lambert's remark about the sandwiches which he made a few pages back. "I have heard at least a dozen persons speak of her this afternoon I should think, and call her Aunt Wainwright."

Charlie Lambert laughed.

"I know it; and it is rather a singular thing. We all claim her as aunt, and she is not related to any of us. It can not be accounted for on the ground that she is particularly winning in her manners, for I

consider her rather sharp than otherwise. Don't you, Fannie?"

"I don't know her very well," Fannie said, "but I have heard that she could be sarcastic when she chose. I think people fell into the habit of calling her 'auntie' years ago, when she had a host of nephews and nieces about her. She belongs to one of the old families, Mildred, who lived here before Eastwood was a town; but her relatives are all scattered, and she lives alone in a lovely place, and is rich, and people like to get invited to roam through her grounds, and eat her chickens and cream. We wouldn't any of us mind having her for a 'truly' auntie, as the children say."

"She is an original character to talk," said Charlie. "I always give her a chance at me, because I like to hear her go on. She is an old school friend of my mother, and has special jurisdiction over me in consequence; and she doesn't spare me, I assure you. I ought to be worth something after she gets me brought up. Do you know her, McLean? Then you ought to; she is

a rich character to study. Let's all go up there, and I'll give you an introduction. The hero of the day is there, too; perhaps we will be treated to a free temperance lecture."

And this was why they mounted the hill, and sat down by the rock with the stream gurgling below them.

Several others, by accident or design, strolled that way and were cordially welcomed. Not very far from them a brisk fire was burning, and a committee of those long-suffering people who always do the work at all picnics were engaged in making coffee, roasting corn, and in various other ways, preparing to regale the groups. The general arrangements of this picnic were somewhat unique. At least they would have been in any other town. The people of Eastwood had the matter reduced to a science. It was fully understood that these fortunate persons, whether gentlemen or ladies, who came from homes, should bring with them well-stored baskets, with bread, and cake, and whatever they or

their home party needed to make a substantial meal; always, of course, adding a little for the benefit of those unfortunates who had no homes, but lived in boarding-houses. They, on their part, were sure to be laden with coffee, sugar, lemons, pickles, anything that was buyable at first-class groceries. Then each individual who joined a group understood that his or her basket would be presently confiscated by a committee appointed by the said group, and in due time a collation would be served, consisting of something from his own basket, if he could pick it out, and something from all the other baskets belonging to the clique. The great fire, built up scientifically under a certain tree, did duty for the entire party. The great boiler of coffee sent out its appetizing signal when ready, and as many pitchers, or pails, or coffee pots, as were forwarded from the various groups were promptly filled from the generous boiler. It is certainly a very nice way to have a picnic; except, perhaps, for the people who manage the coffee, and feed the

fires, and roast the corn, or the apples or whatever is to be roasted besides their own faces.

Well, now you understand, or at least if you knew Miss Wainwright, you could think of several reasons why the spot where she was seated would be a favorite one. People well acquainted with her knew that her brown basket was very large, and that the glass cans set in a pail of ice, which accompanied the brown basket, would be filled with genuine cream, skimmed from four quart pans which had been all the morning in Miss Wainwright's stone dairy, preparing themselves for this occasion.

There were others, as I said, who had been drawn, through various motives, to this same spot. One was Miss Fleming. She distinguished herself on this particular occasion by wearing a light silk dress, which she sighingly remarked, spotted if so much as a drop of water touched it, to say nothing of drops of coffee and cream; and by wearing such delicate boots that, in jumping a log, one of them split from seam

to seam, and that foot had to be tucked under her in some skilful way, for the rest of the time, when she was seated, and to be endured with mortification when she walked. While the coffee was being served, and before the conversation had become general, Miss Fleming suddenly addressed Fannie Copeland, with whom she was not on terms of exceeding intimacy:

"By the way, Miss Copeland, who is that girl who brought you a pin when you tore your skirt down there by the fall? I never saw her at any of our gatherings before, that I remember."

If anybody had been paying close attention to Fannie Copeland at that moment they would have seen that her cheeks glowed deeper than the autumn leaves in her bouquet, but she answered promptly —

"Her name is Hartzell."

"Hartzell? Why, I know that name, don't I? What makes it so familiar? Where does she come from?"

"From Eastwood, Miss Fleming, on the two o'clock train."

"Yes, of course," laughed Miss Fleming, "but I mean originally. I don't know her. I thought I knew all the girls in society, by sight at least."

Was Miss Fleming obtuse or hateful? Fannie would have given something to know which. Meantime, she waited for her answer.

"She is not in society," Fannie said, biting her lips, and trying to keep her voice steady, "but she lives in Eastwood."

"Indeed! How strange that I should not know her. Everybody knows everybody else in our little villages, Mr. Cleveland. Where did you say she lived, Fannie?"

Fannie had not said, but, clearly, she must do so. She drew a long breath; there was no help for it.

"She lives with us just now, Miss Fleming; her home is in Varley's Lane."

"Down on the Flats?"

It would be impossible, probably, to convey to you an idea of what Miss Fleming's voice expressed, because, you see, you are not acquainted with the Flats; but to the

initiated that word meant as great a remove from the proprieties of life as Miss Fleming, at least, was able in her imagination to reach.

"Why, how very queer that the girl should come here this afternoon! How do you account for it, my dear Miss Copeland? It must be quite a trial to you."

Oh! that Fannie Copeland could truthfully say it was not a trial; that she was glad to have her enjoy the lovely afternoon; but the bitter truth was, that from the moment of their starting up to this time, Kate Hartzell had been a trial to her. If she was in the group, the embarrassing question was what to do with her; to whom to introduce her. Who would treat her kindly, and make the day as pleasant for her as possible? Who would consider it an insult to be presented to her? And constantly revolving these trying questions in her mind, Fannie had thus far been unable to settle them, and had shirked all introductions, leaving Kate to care for herself. Still when she lost sight of her, it

was not much better. The question then was: What was Kate doing? Where was she? Had she anybody to talk with? Was she having a miserable time? Fannie liked her well enough to wish it were possible for her to have a good time, and yet not trouble her in any way. How silly it had been in the girl to go to such a place! How mistaken mother was in supposing that it was the right thing to do. This was always the spot to which poor Fannie's thoughts returned.

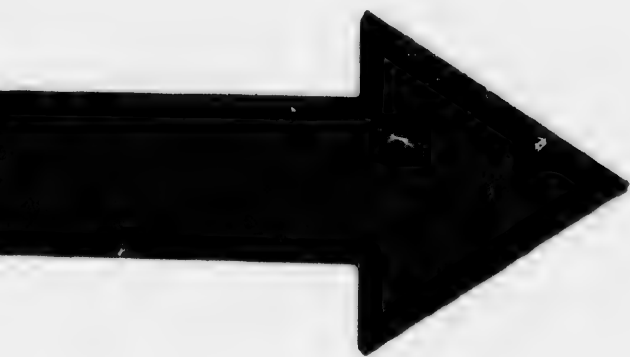
Yet here was this dreadful Miss Fleming waiting for her answer. Before it was ready, Miss Wainwright had asked a question:

"Isn't the girl respectable, Miss Fleming?"

Miss Fleming shrugged her narrow shoulders, and drew a breadth of her dress away from Charlie Lambert's coffee-cup.

"Respectable, my dear Miss Wainwright, how should I know? We will hope so; why, we must accept it, of course, since Miss Copeland indorses her. Or, I suppose,





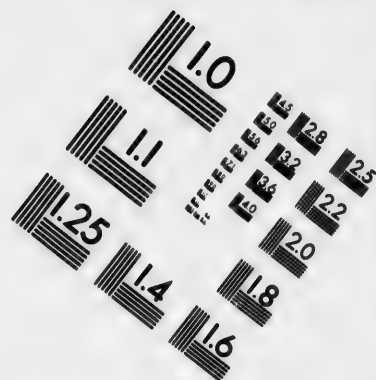
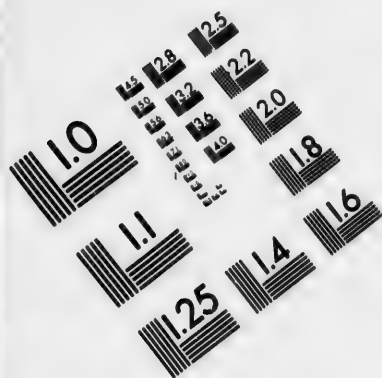
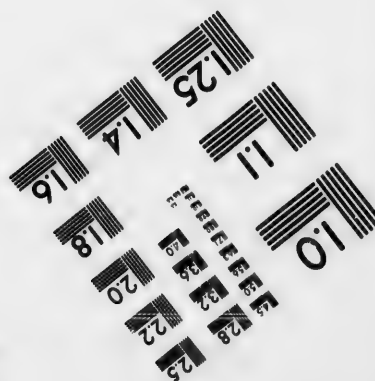
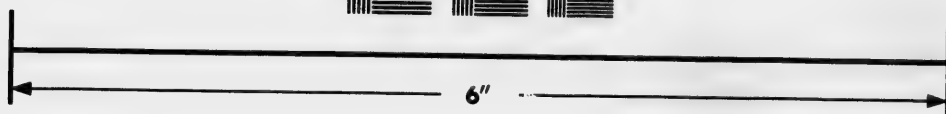
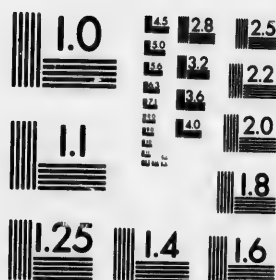


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that isn't quite fair; you couldn't help her coming to a public picnic if she took a fancy of that sort, I presume. Why, Miss Wainwright, you surely know the condition of the Flats; the girl must be a relative of that Old Joe Hartzell if she lives down there. Is she *really*, Miss Copeland?"

"She is his daughter."

Miss Fleming exclaimed in dismay, and then further explained:

"My dear Miss Wainwright, he is one of the worst drunkards on the Flats!"

"Well, I should think that, as far as it went, was an excellent reason why his daughter should be entitled to sympathy."

"To sympathy, oh! yes; but we are hardly bound to make an intimate associate of her, I suppose."

This with a disagreeable little laugh which in no wise disconcerted Miss Wainwright.

"That would have to depend on her individual merit, I should say. The mere circumstance of her father having become a drunkard has nothing to do with her individual worth, has it? I believe in young

women not associating with those who drink. I honor your exclusiveness in that direction; but when it comes to excluding the sons and daughters of drunkards, who are in no wise responsible for their father's sins, isn't that rather hard?"

There was that about this sentence which made Miss Fleming wince. At least, several persons in the group knew that she was not noted for exclusiveness for the cause assigned. On the contrary, young Pierson, who had at all times the entrée of her father's house, and was on very familiar terms with his daughter, was himself almost what might be styled a drunkard. But, then, his father did not live on the Flats; in fact, he owned the finest hotel in Eastwood, beside a great deal of other valuable property, and was a candidate for the Legislature.

Miss Fleming answered with some asperity:

"Oh! I have not the slightest objection to Miss Copeland's choosing her friends from whom she will, of course; it was merely a

passing curiosity. I knew the girl was not in our set."

This sentence did not help Fannie Copeland; neither did what followed. It so happened that Mildred had been absent from the group when this conversation commenced, having been challenged by Lloyd McLean to step to the very edge of the rock which leaned daringly over the chasm below, in order to get a view which, in his judgment, could be had from no other point. She had tried it, and returned in safety, in time, not to hear anything which had been said, but to catch a glimpse of Kate Hartzell standing alone at the base of the hill, a look of embarrassment and irresoluteness on her face; she was beginning to feel that she belonged nowhere. Groups were gathering for supper; nobody had invited her; nobody, so far, had made it possible for her to join them. Indeed, none of them had thought of it, save Fannie Copeland, and she had studiously avoided being in Kate's vicinity for the last hour. Now, if poor Kate had any supper to which

she was entitled, it certainly reposed in the willow basket which she had herself carried to the train. But she felt that it would be much easier to go supperless than it would be to climb that hill alone with the eyes of all the company on the rocks watching her, and take her seat among them. What a pity that she had been tempted into going to the picnic! Her better judgment had told her not to do it; but Mrs. Copeland had so kindly urged it and Fannie, since she came home from school, had been so pleasant, and it had seemed as though it would be *so* nice to belong, just for once, that she had yielded; but she would never, no, never, try to be anybody again! A good deal of this bitterness was in her face as she stood down there, uncertain where to go, knowing no place to hide from eyes. Mildred saw her distinctly and spoke distinctly about her:

"Why, Fannie, there is Kate at the foot of the hill looking deserted; oughtn't you to call her up?"

Poor Fannie, who was being tried in a

way that Mildred, with her different nature, could hardly understand, answered sharply:

"She certainly knows enough to come up here, if she wishes, without waiting for me to call her; she is not my special charge, Mildred, though everybody seems determined to suppose so."

Mildred, not having heard the conversation, and not seeing then the look of suppressed amusement on Miss Fleming's face, felt only surprise at Fannie's tones, but turned from her and gave attention to the young girl at the foot, her voice sounding out clearly among the hills:

"Come up, Kate; supper is ready, and there is just room for you."

"I'm sure I don't know where!" said Miss Fleming; "we are crowded a little as it is."

A sudden light, as of one who had seen a rift in the cloud of her gloom, came over the face below, but Kate shook her head; she could see Fannie Copeland's face.

"Thank you," she said, "I don't think I want any supper. I will walk down the ravine a little way."

At this point Mr. Cleveland arose from his position on an overhanging cliff and crossed the table-land which separated him from Mildred.

"The ascent is rather ugly for a lady alone, Miss Powers; but if you do not mind it, suppose I pilot you down to your friend, then I will engage to see you both landed safely on this very platform ready for coffee."

"Thank you," said Mildred, brightly, "I shall be very glad, indeed, to go."

And they made the descent rapidly, leaving a group in various stages of surprise to gaze after them. As for Fannie, her face was in a flame.

CHAPTER VI.

SHALL WE TRY?

HE appears to be working out the verse," said Miss Wainwright, gazing after the descending couple thoughtfully, and speaking aloud to herself rather than to any of the circle.

"What verse is that, Miss Wainwright?" It was Mr. Durant's voice. He had been enjoying this woman all the afternoon, after the fashion of a student of human nature when he meets with an original character to study. He spoke, now, with the air of one who expected an enjoyable reply.

"It is a verse I stumbled on this morning, that has been puzzling me all day," she said, turning her gray eyes on the questioner, her face saying, almost as plainly as words could: I wonder if it is worth

while to tell you anything about it? Could you help, do you suppose? "It has been in my Bible all these years, of course; but I suppose I've always read it in an unknown tongue until this morning; anyway, it never brought me right up breathless as it did to-day. Why, it is about the eating and drinking and everything else in life. 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' I must say it stumbled me."

"Because it is hard to do, do you think?" Mr. Durant's voice was gentle, and the farthest possible remove from being quizzical. In fact, it said to the listener that he recognized the authority of her Author, and the human difficulties in the way.

"Because it seems almost impossible. Here's this picnic, for instance. How is the rule going to be lived up to in such a place? Now that I've got my eyes open, I can't help watching to see who is doing it, and I haven't found many who seem to be even trying. That couple down there may have some such notion in their minds, though."

Mr. Durant was smiling now.

"My friend, Mr. Cleveland, spoke to me of having found you in a puzzled state of mind this morning, and since he quoted the verse which troubled you, I have been studying him. I think I could tell you of half a dozen little things that he has done since he came on the ground which had that great thought for their underlying motive; and yet I do not suppose that many people know it. That has given me courage, Miss Wainwright. I have remembered that there may be many, at this very picnic, who are engaged in watching for opportunities, only we, not being able to read hearts, are blind to the efforts."

"That is true," Miss Wainwright said, cordially. "I've often told myself that I was like an illustrious character in one thing, anyway. I don't know how many times I have reminded myself of Elijah sitting under a juniper-tree, and groaning that he wished he could die, because he was the only one left to serve the Lord. It always struck me as rather small in

Elijah to want to die just then, even if that were the case—all the more need of his living; but the Lord told him it was no such thing; that there were seven thousand of his people, even in that very country. I think that is one of the most encouraging things there is in the Bible; but a body wants to read it about three times a day in order to remember it when we see the goings-on that there are in these times."

"I have thought of this picnic under the light of that verse to-day, Miss Wainwright, and I wondered whether a picnic at Eastwood, which held itself strictly to coffee and lemonade for beverages, was not a step in advance. I was told, to-day, that there had not been one of these public picnics within the memory of the people in which wines had not been brought along—at least a bottle or two—for the entertainment of certain circles."

"That is true," Miss Wainwright said, "and it has been one reason why some people would have nothing to do with these public days. I haven't been to a

gathering of the kind in fifteen years. I said last week that I would go, because the name of it was a temperance picnic, and I meant to go to everything which had that word attached to it. I really suppose that is a thing to be glad of; but the fact is, I was so engaged in being ashamed that it was not the case years ago, that I suppose I forgot to be glad. Still, we have to thank you for even so much. I suppose they wouldn't make a picnic for a temperance lecturer, and then insult him by taking any of the stuff along; but if you hadn't been here, it would have come in some form or other. There isn't a thing being done in this town for temperance, Mr. Durant. Why, don't you think it your duty to stay here and work? There can't be a place that needs it worse."

"Come this way, Cleveland," said Mr. Durant, rising, as a party of three came slowly up the hill; "there is plenty of room here. How do you do, Miss Hartzell? You climbed the rocks deftly; I was watching you. Take this seat. Sit down,

Cleveland, there is ample room. Miss Hartzell, I should have claimed acquaintance at once, if Mr. Cleveland had not introduced me, because I used to have a friend in college of your name, and he resembled you — John Hartzell."

Miss Fleming was almost betrayed into a giggle as well as a sneer. To have the name of Hartzell associated with that of a college student struck her as extremely amusing. But Kate's answer was prompt enough:

"He was my brother, sir."

"I thought there must be a family tie between you; the likeness is very marked. I remember John well. Where is he now, and what is he doing, may I ask?"

For a full minute, which of course seemed like five, there was no answer to this question. Kate's eyes were on the ground, and her face was pale. Curious and astonished eyes were bent on her. Old Joe Hartzell having a son in college! That, certainly, was a revelation to Eastwood.

"He lives in Eastwood, sir; but you

would not want to see him; you would never know that you had seen him; he has become a drunkard."

"Is it possible?" Mr. Durant's voice was full of pain. "Why, I remember him as a young man of great promise; he was younger than I—was a junior when I was a senior. It can not be ten years since he graduated."

"He never graduated, sir. He left college in disgrace, caused by drink, and has gone down steadily ever since."

"And did I understand you to say that he lived in Eastwood?"

All the circle listened eagerly for the answer. With the exception of Mr. Cleveland, they were all more or less familiar with the name of Old Joe Hartzell, who, for years, had been one of the worst drunkards on the Flats; but that he had a son was news to them all. They had always supposed that this one daughter, who appeared on the scene but a few months before, was Old Joe's sole family, and that since she had left the hovel in which he

hid himself when he was at his worst, he staid there alone.

"He has come to Eastwood, sir, within the last few months; he lives with my father, down at the lower end of the town."

"And your mother, Miss Hartzell? I saw her once."

Poor Kate's lip quivered, and two red spots glowed on her cheeks.

"Mother died just after John was expelled from the college. She escaped the worst, thank God!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Hartzell, for all these questions; they are not prompted by idle curiosity. Do your father and brother live alone?"

"He is a married man, sir, and his wife is with them."

Miss Fleming curled her lip decidedly, and turned herself quite away from the group; a married drunkard was, for some reason, much less interesting to her than an unmarried one.

"We are becoming democratic in our

customs with almost alarming rapidity, I think," she said, a sneer in her voice. "This is certainly a mixed company. I wonder if the brother and his wife are among the crowd? Perhaps Old Joe himself came; who knows?"

Nobody laughed, and Lloyd McLean, who was nearest to her, said:

"I am glad your voice is too low for the poor girl to hear you. I think she has quite enough to bear."

Miss Fleming tossed her head.

"Oh! I am not a fanatic in any direction," she said. "I do not run wild on this temperance question, in any of its phases. I believe that gentlemen, who are worthy of the name, can control their appetites, if they choose, in this direction as well as in any other; and if they do not, they are beasts, and should be dropped from respectable society."

"Not surely while they are worth fifty thousand dollars! You would wait until that is gone, would you not, Josie?"

It was Charlie Lambert's mischievous voice

that asked the question; he had known Miss Fleming all his life, and he knew young Pierson, also.

The lady turned toward him haughtily.

"I suppose that is intended to be a sarcasm at the expense of Leonard Pierson?" she said, angrily. "I don't think it applies. I suppose Mr. Pierson recognizes his right to eat and drink what he pleases, so long as he disturbs nobody. When he lies in the gutter, like a common drunkard, or reels through the streets, making himself a public laughing-stock, it will be time enough to talk about dropping him. At present, he certainly belongs to a different set from Old Joe Hartzell."

Her voice was loud enough, now, to be heard; but the attention of most of the circle had been skilfully drawn in another direction. Mr. Cleveland had appeared with a pitcher of steaming coffee, followed by a salver bearing cups, cream and sugar.

"Sit down, Durant," he said, "and let me serve you to some of the best coffee you ever tasted; here is real cream to de-

velop it with. Miss Hartzell, let me sugar and cream a cup for you just right. There is an art in it; few people possess the secret. I want you to witness that I do."

He resigned his tray to Charlie Lambert, took a seat beside Kate, and not only creamed the coffee, but succeeded in getting her to take it, and, presently, to eat a few bits of the biscuit with which he supplied her. She was evidently having a struggle with her tears. They had threatened her for hours; but during this last experience it had seemed to her that they must burst forth in a perfect storm; that she could no longer hope to control herself. Mr. Cleveland, however, continued to talk, in low, quiet tones, on all sorts of commonplaces, to which she could listen or not according as it helped her to do, and meantime his form shielded her perfectly from observation; and at last, when he said, in an authoritative tone, "Now, you are to take a swallow of this coffee and eat this biscuit," she looked up at him with grateful eyes, in which the tears were

standing that she meant should not fall, and tried to do as he said.

When he saw by the color in her face that she was getting firm control of herself, he leaned toward her with a kind—

“Let me arrange that shawl a little more comfortably,” and spoke low while he was doing it. “You ought not to be hopeless, as I saw by your tones that you are. You do not know Durant; if you did, you would thank God on your knees that he used to be your brother’s friend. He will not forget it, nor him. I know, now, why he could not carry out his plans and go West this morning. God has work for him here, Miss Hartzell, Durant has been as low as it is possible for any brother ever to have been, and look at him now! He, and you, and I, must save your brother, and scores of others. Shall we try?”

“I really believe the fastidious gentleman is smitten with Old Joe’s daughter!”

It was a whisper, but one of those disagreeable whispers which seem to penetrate space and make themselves heard at alarm-

ing distances. Of course, Miss Fleming was the whisperer. Whether Mr. Cleveland heard her or not, will never be known; his face wore a look of the most perfect unconcern, and he only said:

"Let me warm your coffee a little, Miss Hartzell; this breeze blowing around here is very insolent."

But Lloyd McLean's face flushed over the intended insult, and he darted an angry glance at the whisperer, just as Charlie Lambert, presuming upon his long intimacy, said angrily:

"Upon my word, Josie, I would have a little regard for humanity; I think the poor girl has had enough to bear."

Meantime, Mr. Durant returned abruptly to the subject which he had himself broken in upon when the trio came up the hill.

"I did not answer your question, Miss Wainwright, as to why I did not find my work here. Let me answer it by asking another. Why don't you people who are set down here do the work, so that there would be no need for outsiders?"

"Humph!" said Miss Wainwright, and her way of using that exclamation made it equal to a half-hour's talk from some mouths, "I wish we knew enough to do anything; or that there were anything we could do. If there is a place of its size anywhere in the world more cursed with alcohol than Eastwood, I don't want to hear anything about it, for this is bad enough. There hasn't been a thing done here for the cause of temperance in years!"

"Then I must repeat my first question with emphasis, Why do you permit such a state of things?"

"Why do I! How am I to help it? I am nothing but an old maid, Mr. Durant; haven't even a husband to talk for me, or vote for me; which perhaps is fortunate, for ten chances to one that he would talk and vote the wrong way, if I had."

This caused a burst of laughter from nearly every one in the group, save Mr. Durant; his face was grave.

"The influence of one good woman is a power in a community. I can never forget

what my mother was in a town of this size; and she had to work alone. I remember as a distinctive feature of my boyhood the temperance prayer meeting that she helped sustain. You can certainly do so much for the cause in this town, Miss Wainwright?"

"No; we can't. Nobody would come to one except Doctor Brandon, and he would have to drag the meeting along after him. He has enough of that sort of work to do now; I don't believe in adding to it."

"Nor do I; but I believe a parlor prayer meeting to which your pastor received a cordial invitation *not* to come would rest his soul as nothing has done of late. Pastors everywhere are left to lead in places where they should be permitted to look on and say 'thank God.' Is there any good reason why you, and one other woman whom I know, and Mr. Cleveland, and Mr. McLean, and any other people whom you can persuade to come, should not meet in your parlor, or in Mr. Cleveland's parlor, and spend an hour in prayer for the cause of temperance?"

"Who is the other woman? I suppose that would be a prayer meeting, sure enough; and we could appoint it ourselves. Keziah would come; she is temperance to the core. I never thought of it; that hints at an answer to one of my puzzles, too. I went into my parlor this morning and asked it what under the sun it thought it was doing in the world, anyhow. It is a great big room, Mr. Durant, furnished well enough, and it gets swept and dusted regularly, and that is about all. Oh! when I entertain the church societies I open it, of course; if they are for the glory of God — and I hope they are, though sometimes I have my doubts — why, then, it does so much. I'll try for that. Well, what else?"

CHAPTER VII.

LOGIC.

MR. DURANT'S face was growing bright. Here was a woman who meant business.

"This prayer meeting," he said, "you would find that it could reach in many ways. It ought to be the place where the wives and mothers and sisters and daughters of drunkards could meet, sure of sympathetic hearts to join with them in prayer for their loved ones bound in chains."

"I don't know many such who pray, Mr. Durant." Miss Wainwright's voice was gentle. It was plain that the suggestion touched her, thrilled her. She saw its possibilities, if only they had been people who prayed at all!

"No, many of them do not; but they

ought to be won to pray. They are heavily burdened—how heavily no one can fully realize, unless he has been one of the burden-bearers, or one of the enslaved. The knowledge of the fact that a dozen people, or three, or two, or one person, had set apart an hour in which to pray for them and theirs would draw these women as nothing else could. They would not all rush in the moment they heard of such a meeting, because the sad fact is, that our way of praying for these poor victims is not such as to convince lookers-on that we are terribly in earnest; but, once assured of that fact, such sufferers can be won. How many times have you tried it, Miss Wainwright?"

"Never once," said that lady, shutting her lips together with great firmness.

Something in the tone encouraged Mr. Durant to believe that she would never have a like answer to make again.

"Another point. With how many homes of drunkards are you familiar? How many wives know of you as one woman to whom

they can come when the bitterness of hell on earth gets hold of them, assured that your heart will be ready to sympathize, and your hand will be reached out to help? How many poor fellows on their way to the comfortable liquor saloons, where, at least, they can have light and warmth, have you taken by the hand with friendly words and offers of assistance in any form that you thought they most needed?"

Miss Wainwright was spared the need for a reply. It was Miss Fleming who suddenly took up the conversation from her standpoint.

"But, don't you think, Mr. Durant, that such treatment would be simply encouraging men who have no business to make beasts of themselves? For my part, I have no patience with drunkards. If I spoke to them at all, I would tell them so. I don't believe in encouraging vice."

Mr. Durant gave her the benefit of a pair of flashing eyes.

"My dear young lady," he said, "do you know you are talking about what you do

not in the least understand? I confess to having very little patience with moderate drinkers, or occasional drinkers, because they boast — and, I suppose, believe — that they can easily give up the fascinations of alcohol whenever they choose; and, believing this, they deliberately choose not to give it up, though they know, every one of them, that their example helps others to ruin. But a drunkard is as veritable a slave as though he were chained hand and foot with visible chains. He can no more, with his own unaided strength, break those chains than he could with his two hands break away from the iron chain and padlock which held him behind prison bars. He is the victim of a disease, merciless in its grasp, and yet of such a nature that it will require will-power to overcome it; and he has so weakened his will-power by disease that it has not force enough to overcome. As a rule, a stronger will than his must step in to the rescue, and he must with his weak will lay hold on that strong one, or the man is lost. It

is the business of Christ's people to be forever pointing out that strong will, and urging, by all means in their power, those diseased wills to hide themselves in this strong one. *You* may not have patience with a drunkard — human patience is a very weak and contemptible thing — but if you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, you have found in him infinite patience, and it is his command that you struggle to make this patience yours, and to watch over, and weep for, and pray for the fallen with Christ-like patience and Christ-like tenacity."

He had fairly poured out the words upon her, while the others sat listening — silent, yet if one might judge from their faces, busy with earnest thought.

"Oh, well," said Miss Fleming, with a light laugh, "I am not a fanatic."

"May I ask you, Miss Fleming, what a fanatic is?"

"What it is? Why, it is — a — a fanatic!"

"Precisely. I wanted a definition of the word. I infer, from your use of it, that

you judge me, for instance, to be one. It was for that reason I asked the question. I think Webster defines fanatic as one who indulges in wild or extravagant notions, especially on religious subjects. Now I would like to ask you whether you consider it extravagant to believe that a drunkard needs saving, if he is ever going to be fit for heaven, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is able and willing to save, if the drunkard can only be persuaded to accept of his aid. Is there anything fanatical about that?"

"I think a man need not be a drunkard unless he chooses; and if he chooses to so degrade himself, he is a person not worth thinking about."

Certain sufficient glances were exchanged behind the back of the speaker, and Charlie Lambert went so far as to say, "Why, Josie!"

"Well, I don't," said Miss Fleming, in increasing irritation, "and I should say the same thing about my own brother or father."

Was it possible that she did not know that at least the brother was in great and increasing danger? This was the thought in more than one heart. But Mr. Durant looked in no wise shocked; it would have been hard for Josie Fleming to have advanced an idea, however illogical or unchristian, that he had not heard before.

"Suppose, for the sake of argument, that I grant part of your statement, that a man need not become a drunkard unless he chooses; there is a period in his life when it is undoubtedly true; now let us see where this logic leads. A man mounts a vicious horse to take a ride for pleasure; he is aware that the horse is dangerous, that he has thrown others; he is warned not to try it. He knows that the road down which he has determined to ride is a peculiarly dangerous one; other accidents have occurred there. He need not travel that road unless he chooses; he need not ride that horse unless he chooses. He chooses to do it; he is thrown, and his hip joint is broken, and his leg is broken in

two places; and he lies on the road where the down train will pass in a few hours; he can no more pick himself up and limp back to safety, with his poor maimed limbs, than he can gather himself up and fly; and he is your brother. Do I understand you to say he is not worth thinking about; that he ought to be left to lie there and perish?"

"Mr. Durant, how far do you think a man can indulge his taste for liquor, and yet keep inside the line where he can reform if he will?"

It was not Josie Fleming, but Lloyd McLean, who asked the question, and there was so much earnestness in his voice that more than one turned and looked closely at him.

Mr. Durant shook his head.

"It is not for me, it is not for any man, to say; the supposed power of the human will is what has wrecked many a soul. It is like other organs of the body; like the muscles, for instance. Put them under careful training; give them legitimate work;

to do; develop them in the line in which they were meant to be developed, and you may trust them to almost any extent; but let them lie flabby and useless, or abuse them by systematic ill use, and they are unfit for a strain; not to be depended upon. God meant that the human will should be a great engine for good, but the human will perverted, is a rotten plank, on which one's weight can not be trusted. I tremble for a man who has the natural taste for intoxicants in his system; I tremble for any man who indulges to ever so slight a degree in that which can create a thirst for intoxicants. It fact, I may almost say that in this age of the world, and with the temptations toward this evil, which lie thickly strewn in every road, I tremble for any man whose will is not anchored on the rock Christ Jesus."

"Still, men do pledge their wills that they will have nothing to do with the poison, and, apparently unaided, they succeed in overcoming."

It was still McLean who spoke, and there

was still the ring of deep feeling in his voice.

"Yes," Mr. Durant said, "there are men who do; there is now and then one who actually overcomes the thirst after it has been once developed. There are a very few who have lived through life in that way and died; saved, so far as this world is concerned, without Christ. But the number is so few that the statistics should alarm, instead of encourage us, and why any man should want to subject his will to such a fearful strain as that, and accomplish only a half-way salvation, which will not reach beyond the grave, is more than I can understand, especially when the world is so full of such grand chances to educate the will in directions which will tell for eternity, as well as time. I confess, I wish I could see young men, at least, becoming ambitious to reach their highest."

"But some men think it is the mark of a coward to whine about their inability to keep themselves in temptation."

"I know some men talk so, but every

true man knows that it is the mark of a coward to run into needless danger, and I pity the man who has not brain power enough, and insight into the future enough, not to be willing to be anchored in God."

I would like to describe to you if I could, the way in which Mr. Durant spoke that name. There was such a reminder in it that, he felt a rock of strength underneath every one who anchored there.

"Still, don't you think a promise made to another goes a great way?"

It was the first time Mildred Powers had spoken since the conversation had become general. Mr. Durant turned toward her, his face pale and grave.

"Yes," he said, earnestly, "it sometimes goes a great way. I promised my mother when she lay dying that I would never touch a drop of liquor in any form; and it held me for nine months; and just a year from the night she died, I lay in the gutter all night drunk! It was after that, months afterward, that I cast myself on God; confessing to him

that I could not even be true to my mother, and he undertook the desperate case for me, and has held me ever since. I know that my safety is in him. But I would urge the human pledge always, and cry out always after the higher, absolutely safe ground."

"I am glad that young McLean made one of our party this afternoon and heard the words he did. I am deeply interested in that young man, and would like to get some sort of a hold on him. If I am not mistaken, some things which Mr. Durant said have made an impression."

It was Mr. Cleveland who spoke, and his words were addressed to Miss Wainwright. The collation was over, the débris was being cleared away, and the various companies were strolling about gathering ferns and other souvenirs of the bright autumn day.

Miss Wainwright started visibly as this sentence was spoken low for her ear, and a curious look came into her face.

"What did you say his name was?"

"McLean, the young man who came up the cliff in company with Miss Powers. Young Lambert introduced you."

"I did not notice the name. Who is he?"

"A young man who is employed in the post-office here. He has not been here long, I am told; but I happen to be deeply interested in him because I knew of his father. He was my father's business agent once, and my father tried to save him."

"Are you speaking of James L. McLean, who studied law at Harvard?"

"He was the father. Did you know him?"

"I knew him when he was young, younger perhaps than this boy; I don't know. What became of him?"

"He died a drunkard."

Miss Wainwright started again, and a gray look came into her face.

"Are you sure?" she asked with energy.

"Well, I shouldn't say that. He was injured in a drunken quarrel between some of the railroad men whom it was his duty

to oversee; he lived for two or possibly three weeks, but I have understood that he was in great pain, and I never heard anything to base a hope on that he did not die as he had lived. Yet the particulars of his death I never heard. I have thought since I met the son that I would like to know more, but it is a hard thing to inquire about. Lloyd must have been quite a boy when his father died. Did you know the family intimately, Miss Wainwright?"

"I did not know the family at all. I knew James when he was in college. We were good friends, but we quarrelled on this very question, and I never saw him afterward; still there must have been some change before he died. It seems to me there *must* have been."

There was peculiar emphasis in the last sentence. Mr. Cleveland regarded her searchingly for a moment and was silent.

"The Lord answers the prayer of those who try to do right and trust in him, doesn't he, Mr. Cleveland?"

"Always. But it may not always be in the way we plan."

Then both were silent, until Miss Wainwright suddenly said:

"Well, we must save the son. I wonder if he wouldn't come to that prayer meeting? When shall we have it, Mr. Cleveland? I didn't know James had a son. It is strange I did not notice the name. How strangely lives are mixed! I wonder if it will be discovered some day, that we all had to do with the shaping of all other lives, though we did not know it."

She was a good deal shaken. Some memory of an old experience had stirred her strangely. But she broke off suddenly to call Mr. Durant, who was passing. He was helping Mildred Powers down the cliff, and Lloyd McLean was doing the same for Kate Hartzell.

"Mr. Durant, you did not tell me who that other woman is."

"That other woman," said Mr. Durant, pausing on a ledge of rock, "is Miss Priscilla Hunter, a maiden lady who has just

come here to live. If you have not heard of her before, you will do well to make her acquaintance. I think you will find her a woman after your own heart on the temperance question, as well as on some others. She will come to your prayer meeting without a doubt. When do you mean to start it?"

"Next Saturday night," said Miss Wainwright, promptly; "I think that will be the best evening; it is the nearest available one, any way, since to-day is Thursday. I like to do things before they get cold. Young man," and she suddenly turned and laid her hand on Lloyd McLean's arm, "will you come to the meeting?"

He looked surprised, and shook his head, with a smile in his merry eyes:

"I think you will be glad to excuse me, Miss Wainwright; prayer meetings of any sort are not in my line."

"I didn't ask you whether they were or not. I want you to come to this one. It won't be in the line of any prayer meeting that you ever heard of, I don't believe. I

want to see you ; I knew your father once."

The handsome boyish face shadowed for a moment, then Lloyd said :

"I will come and see you."

"Will you come on Saturday evening?"

But this he would not promise.

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CHAPTER VIII.

SEVERAL STARTLING POINTS.

SEVERAL bits of important conversation were indulged in by these people as they slowly and with many stops to admire sunset views, made their way down the hills, along the river path, toward the depot. Among others was Mr. Durant's question, just as they reached a bit of level ground:

"Miss Wainwright, what do you want our government to do on the liquor question?"

The answer came with the promptness of one who had been studying the subject.

"Want them to annihilate it."

"So I supposed. What are you doing toward that issue? How many votes do you influence?"

Miss Wainwright bestowed a searching look on him to learn whether this was nonsense or earnestness, and seeing only a grave, interested face, remarked, dryly:

"I thought I told you I was an old maid?"

"But that, surely, does not mean that you have no gentleman friends with whom your opinions, if they are carefully studied and earnestly expressed, have not more or less weight?"

"I don't know about that," said Miss Wainwright, thoughtfully. "I have never said much about it to men. It always seemed to me as though they thought they knew so much, that it would be almost a pity if they should learn any more! But I have some good friends among the boys, and they'll vote one of these days. That's an idea, Mr. Durant. I believe I'll train them."

"I know some grand women who are at work at that very business, Miss Wainwright, training the boys of to-day to vote prohibition to-morrow."

"Buying up votes!" said Charlie Lambert,

not with malicious intent, but purely for mischief, in order to see Miss Wainwright's gray eyes flash.

But he was mistaken. They did not flash. She only looked at him with an air of grave reproof, and said:

"Charlie, you are too old for such a silly speech as that."

Whereupon everybody within hearing, even Mr. Durant, laughed. The hopeful thing about Charlie Lambert was that he joined in the laugh, though his color rose a little.

The next bit was for Mildred Powers. She was close beside Miss Wainwright, and said, hurriedly, the pink color in her face deepening a little, as one who was speaking with an effort:

"I heard you repeat a verse a little while ago which I happened to read only this morning. Will you tell me if you think it means that one could really do everything with that motive in view?"

Miss Wainwright looked down at the fair young face with a flash of special interest.

"Were you hit too, child, and by the

very same words? That is a strange coincidence. I wonder if you and I are meant to join forces in any way in the work?"

"I didn't think so much of it at the time I read the verse," said the truthful voice; "but when I heard you quote it this afternoon, I remembered that it was the sentence I had read this morning, and I thought how strange it was. It seemed to say so much, and yet"—

"And yet people are doing so little about it. I understand. Well, I can't give you much light, I'm ashamed to say. I've been professing to serve the Lord for a good many years, but it is as though I had just stumbled over that verse. I'm at work at it, though, and this Mr. Durant has set a light or two to twinkling on the road for me. I can see plainly enough why I was sent to this picnic this afternoon. I shouldn't wonder if I had received a notion of two or three things which could be used to His glory. I mean to try for it, anyway. Why, yes, child, I can't see that the verse means

anything else, only what it says. It is a verse for a lifetime, isn't it? You come and see me when I have had a chance to think, and let us talk it over together."

"Thank you," Mildred said, a grateful light in her eyes. And then she was glad to be left standing by Mr. Durant, on guard over certain baskets, while some of the others went back for more. She had a word that she wanted to speak to him. A little timid she was about it. A great deal of this afternoon was new ground to Mildred Powers. He helped her, however, for he said, looking at his watch:

"I expected to be well on my way toward Chicago by this time. Do you ever have your plans overturned for you, Miss Powers, and do you bear it with patience?"

Instead of answering the question, she asked:

"Do you speak in Chicago?" and there was such eagerness in the tone, that his special attention was arrested.

"Not on my way out," he said; "but

when I make my return trip, in about three weeks, I expect to spend a week or more in that city. It is not your home, I think?"

"Oh, no, sir; I was never there, but I have friends spending the winter there. Mr. Durant, do you, in your temperance work, meet people, and talk with them personally?"

"Frequently; constantly, indeed. I become interested in individual cases, impressed, you know, that I may be able to help them, and I seek them out and try."

A few moments of silence, during which time Mildred tore into little bits the autumn leaves which young McLean had just given her, the flush on her cheeks deepening the while. Suddenly she tossed the bits into the stream at her feet, and spoke with the resolution of one who had reached a decision.

"Mr. Durant, do you—do you suppose you could remember the name of one young man in Chicago, so that if you should meet him you would know that you had heard something about him?"

"I am very well drilled in remembering names, and I carry special items connected with those names in my memory, sometimes for years, waiting opportunities to use them."

"Then I will tell you. There is a Mr. Airedale in Chicago, who, I hope, will meet you. He is a book-keeper in the wholesale house of McGilpin & Co. He is in great danger, I think. He has made a promise, something as you did, not to his mother, but to a friend; but his natural tastes are bitterly against him, and he is proud, and will not let his weakness be known. His family are blind to his danger. His own mother offers him home-made wines, though she knows that he is sorely tempted in that direction. He was fed on brandy for days and weeks when a child. It was a physician's prescription, you know. I do think the whole thing is so wicked, Mr. Durant, but I never knew before that there was anything to do—anything that girls could do, I mean—not until this afternoon, when I heard you talk.

I want to help and I mean to try. I have never done a thing; all I thought I could do was to refuse to do some things, but I see ways of working, or of trying, now."

She was speaking rapidly, her whole face aglow with strong feeling, her eyes bright and her breath coming in little, excited waves, which showed that she was under the control of some strong emotion.

Mr. Durant had taken out his note-book, and was writing an address.

"Could you give me the business number of this Mr. Airedale?" he said. "I am interested in him. I want to seek him out."

She named the street and number, her eyes flashing him such grateful thanks that he told himself he should certainly try for that young man. Then she went on hurriedly:

"There are reasons, Mr. Durant, why I ought not to be mentioned in this connection. I am not to hold communication with him in any way, and this might seem to him almost like sending a message if he

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knew, and I wouldn't wish to do that. I mean mamma"— And she stopped in utter confusion, her eyes heavy with tears.

"I understand," he said gravely; "this is as between you and me about one of the sheep that you and I are bound to help back to the fold if we can. And it is not to be mentioned in any way save to the Good Shepherd himself. I hope to be in Chicago three weeks from to-night, and I will not forget this name. Am I right in my deductions, Miss Powers? do you belong to Christ?"

The tears were dropping quietly now.

"I think I do, Mr. Durant; indeed, I may say I am almost sure that I do, but it is all very new to me; and I came to him through trial and darkness. Sometimes it seems to me as though I only sought him because I had nothing else, and that I was unworthy of his love or care."

She looked young to be talking about "having nothing else," but Mr. Durant knew that the trials of young hearts were very bitter and, perhaps all the harder to

bear because of their lack of the discipline of experience. He had just time for his reply before others joined them.

"There is a sense, certainly, in which we are all of us unworthy of His love or care, but we are always to remember this: that He has chosen us for His own, that we have been bought with a price, that we are held as infinitely precious in his sight, and that, therefore, we must set a high estimate on our own importance, and live accordingly."

After that there was little time for talk. Somebody reported that the train had whistled at the station two miles below, and the various companies gathered their wraps and baskets and made all speed toward the depot.

Just across the ravine, also making rapid strides toward the train, was a party who had been with the company, but not of them, all the afternoon. These were five young men. Had you watched them you would have observed that, while they seemed anxious to reach the train, they were also anxious to avoid close scrutiny from any

others; that they slackened their pace as soon as they found themselves nearing any of the groups hastening in the same direction, and that one of them was receiving somewhat anxious assistance, his face being flushed, and his step unsteady.

It was this man whom Mr. Durant at last observed, and he halted to call across the ravine:

"Is your friend ill, gentlemen? Can we be of any assistance?"

"It is nothing of consequence, a sudden attack of dizziness; he will be all right presently," called back one of the five, his face in a frown, and they noticeably slackened their pace.

Mr. Durant still looked after them.

"The young man who spoke has a hard face," he said, "and it is a very youthful face, too. He can't be more than nineteen or twenty. I have not seen him before. Who is he?"

Charlie Lambert looked about him to see who were within hearing before he replied in a low voice:

"He is a brother of Miss Josie Fleming; and a wild boy, I guess. Has the name of leading a set of fellows who are always in mischief. He is just about twenty."

"Do you know the young man whom they seem to be helping?"

"I did not notice," said Charlie, glancing back; "why, I think I know him; he looks like one of the clerks at Morrison's. Halloo, Lloyd, wait a minute; I thought you said Bruce did not come on this trip. He seems to be back there with Fleming's set, and they say he is sick."

"Sick!" repeated Lloyd, who had been halted by his friend's call, "why, it can't be Bruce; he told me he wasn't coming, and I have seen nothing of him this afternoon. He would naturally have gravitated toward our party if he had been in the company."

Nevertheless, it was Eben Bruce. And to tell you how he came to be of the party, I must return to the starting hour of the train. You will remember that in a spirit of hauteur he had determined not to join

the picnic party. Nevertheless, he was by no means averse to a half-holiday, such opportunities being rare in his experience. He had resolved to spend the afternoon in the office of a medical friend, looking up, in his library, facts about a certain organ which he was just now studying with interest. But the physician's office was closed and locked; an unusual circumstance, and in itself a very trivial matter—that is, apparently. The trivial matters of this life would make a very curious study, if one could trace them from their inception to the hour when their influence ceased to work. In point of fact, the doctor was not absent from his office ten minutes. He merely stepped into the office around the corner to watch a game of cards which was being played. He told himself while he stood there that this was his office hour, and he ought to go; and he told himself that he should go in ten minutes; he would just like to see whether Jones would beat, after all. And during that ten minutes Bruce came and shook

his door and departed disappointed. There was no physician in town, save this young one, with whom he felt on terms of sufficient intimacy to sit in his office and study a medical work. Had the young doctor known of this, he would have said that it was of no consequence, that Bruce could come at another time just as well.

And Bruce, disappointed, yet told himself the same thing, and said he would go back in half an hour or so and try again. He would really like to get that point worked up before the night for the discussion. At that moment out from her door fluttered Miss Josie Fleming, in her light silk and delicate gloves. He was slightly acquainted with her, and she greeted him with a smiling face. It seemed quite natural that at the corner he should resolve to extend his walk in her direction; she was pleasant enough. In her direction lay the depot, and she was going to the picnic, and she urged his attendance, assuring him that it would be "just lovely" at the falls. He wavered in his decision. Why

not go and have a holiday with the rest? But on the platform of the station was Mr. Cleveland, walking back and forth waiting for the arrival of his wagon, loaded with baskets and pails for the lunchers. Miss Fleming admired the aristocratic-looking and supposed-to-be fastidious stranger, and quite turned her back on the young clerk, who was aware that his boots were not of the latest cut, nor of the finest material, and was as sensitive about all those things as a girl. He was not acquainted with Mr. Cleveland, and Miss Fleming did not introduce him, and he presently went around to the other side of the building and assured himself that he was a first-class fool for trying to push himself into society that felt itself too grand for him. Just at that moment appeared Fred Fleming, his handsome face aglow with fun. It was a handsome face, although it was a hard one. There were possibilities in it, either for good or evil, and when he laughed, and his bright eyes twinkled with good feeling, one not deeply

read in life would not be likely to notice that the evil in it was gaining the ascendancy. Young Bruce knew him. He had met him in that very room from which his friend, the doctor, was just now bustling away, and it was his friend, the doctor, who had introduced them one evening, having taken him around to watch a game.

"I don't play myself," the doctor had said, "but I like to watch a game now and then to see what will come of it. That Fred Fleming plays too well for a boy of his years. If he belonged to me, I should be afraid that it would get too deep a hold on him."

And then he had stood beside him and watched the game, and cheered a little at his good luck. But the young doctor was a very moral man, a member of the church, and rarely touched cards.

"Halloo!" had Fred Fleming said the moment he caught sight of the young man, "here's another. Come on, boys, we'll kidnap Bruce, and then there will be five of us. I told you that four was an unlucky

number. I say, Bruce, we are in for a lark. We are bound to shock all the good temperance people to-day. This is a regular Sunday-school affair, this picnic, with all the naughty things, as well as all the naughty people, left at home. At least, that is what the nice, good men and women hope and believe. Now, we are going along to stir them up a little, and give them a chance to exercise some of the Christian virtues. You join us, and we will have a jolly time."

CHAPTER IX.

A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE.

ORDINARILY, a greeting of this sort would have had no charms for Eben Bruce. He was inclined to be quiet and studious. He was ambitious, and meant to be something more than a second book-keeper in a retail store. But just now he felt alone, and friendless, and sore-hearted. He felt like being avenged on all aristocrats who judged of people by the clothes they wore. If Miss Josie Fleming did not think enough of him to introduce him to her high-toned friends, it seems her brother was not of that stamp, for his companions were, two of them, sons of rich men, and they gave him cordial greeting. Why shouldn't he go with people who were glad to have him, and enjoy himself in their way if he could?

And he went forward with them into the smoking car, and accepted a cigar, though, he rarely smoked; and he spent that entire afternoon with those four young men. Not as they had at first intended. In fact, it would have been hard for them to tell what they had at first intended. They had no definite plan beyond the fun of smuggling a basket of wines into the temperance picnic grounds. Fred Fleming, it is true, had planned in his own mind that he would carry a tray of wine-glasses, well filled, among whatever party the temperance lecturer seated himself with, and offer them with his best bow. But this part of the programme he failed to carry out. And I can not help thinking it a pity that he did, because people with wide open eyes can often accomplish what those with the best intentions and blinded eyes fail to do. What these young men had done was to drink more liquor than two of them, at least, were used to. In fact, Eben Bruce was used to none. He had been brought up by a careful mother, who knew little of the world

and its temptations. She used no liquors in her home, because she had never been in the habit of doing so. She attended no temperance meetings, because there had never been any drunkenness in their family, and was not likely to be. She wished well to the cause, because the drunkards—poor miserable wretches—ought to be saved, she supposed, if they *could* be—though they always seemed to her more like brutes than men.

She objected to her little boy's joining a juvenile temperance organization, because she did not believe in urging children to tamper with promises—promises were sacred things. She refused to urge him to join the Young Men's Temperance Society when he was older, because his tastes and inclinations were all in another direction from those "poor tempted fellows" who were becoming members. What was the use in mixing society so? Eben would be a student, and students were always gentlemen.

And so the years passed; and Eben's father died, and the money which was to

send Eben to college was swept away in that mysterious fashion which happens so often, and Eben went out from the shelter of home, with his refined tastes and his student habits, to mix with a world none too gentle at its best, unfortified by warning, or pledge, or any such thing, for the temptations which were sure to assail him on every hand. The wonder was that he had gotten through nearly a year in comparative safety.

He did not know that he possessed the sort of brain which would respond to the touch of alcoholic poison as surely and as quickly as gunpowder responds to the touch of fire. He aimed to be a physician, and pored of nights over musty volumes of learned treatises about the nature of the skin and structure of the human frame, and yet he did not know, not having been taught, the sure action of alcohol on liver and lungs and stomach, and, above all, brain.

It will surely not be considered strange that such was the case, when you remember that apparently only about one physi-

cian in a hundred understands anything of this matter! Poor Eben Bruce was not a physician, and was as ignorant as a babe about some things which he ought to have learned at his mother's knee.

Do you need to be told that he made a discovery that afternoon? Yes; it happened that he had lived to be twenty-one years of age without ever having tasted anything that can intoxicate. He had lived a sheltered home life, and had not chanced to associate with people who tempted him. But it happened also that the first taste awakened a demon within him that may have been sleeping for generations back, for aught that I know. Probably, if you care to trace back the genealogical record of the Bruce family, on the father's or the mother's side, you may find a reason for this sudden flaming into life of a taste that was almost a passion, ready to consume this unguarded young man.

Anyway, whether you do or not, it was there. And you know, or at least you ought to know, that there are hundreds

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and thousands like him, and that they are growing up in homes all about you—their danger you do not suspect. Now, what will be the inevitable result of that afternoon's work? So far as the immediate result is concerned, after the first glass, the victim wanted another and another; he alarmed his four companions; they tried to restrain him; they plunged deeper and deeper into the ravine; they had such an afternoon as they had not planned and will not soon forget. They succeeded at last in getting their lunatic to throw himself down on a bed of ferns and mosses, where he sank into the strangest sleep that his life had ever known. And, when he awakened was it a wonder that his eyes were blood-shot and his step unsteady, and that his head throbbed, and that the pain in it was blinding?

They did not dare, those four, that he should be seen by others of the company; he bore too distinctly the mark of his shame. In fact, he was not yet himself, but demanded more of the poison, and was fierce

because there was none for him. They hurried him to the smoking car; they found him a chance to lie down; they stood guard over him. When Lloyd McLean came in anxious search, they explained that it was a sudden headache which had attacked him, but that he was sleeping now, and they felt sure that rest was what he needed.

"He has been overworking," Lloyd said, standing doubtfully by the side of the sleeper, whose face was carefully shielded from view. "He studied last night until after midnight, and does so nearly every evening."

"It is undoubtedly that which has caused this attack," Fred Fleming said, eagerly. "I noticed that he looked very pale and worn when he came up this afternoon. Oh! he needs rest; he will be better, no doubt, for this nap. I will attend to his comfort when we reach the depot. You have a lady in charge this afternoon, have you not, McLean? Just so. Well, I will see that your friend gets to his room and his bed all right. I told our Jim to be at

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the depot with my phaeton, and I'll just drive around to your boarding-house and see that he is comfortable. Oh! thanks are not necessary; I am glad to do it. Yes, we were on the grounds all the afternoon; but we went off on a tramp through the ravine, and got farther in than we intended. Bruce is a little overdone with the exercise, too, I presume."

And the door closed on Lloyd, who went back to his car and reported that his friend was suffering from nervous headache, but the boys who had taken him in charge were very kind — warm-hearted fellows, evidently, if they were a little wild. And "the boys" laughed as the door closed after him, and Fred Fleming, drawing a relieved breath, declared himself glad that none of the sharper-eyed fellows had come in search of their victims, for if this thing got out there would be no end of talk, which would not be pleasant for the old folks.

And I can not help wondering what poor Eben Bruce's lady mother would have

thought, could she have seen her sheltered boy then! What is to be the fate of such as he? Shielded by no promise, either to mother or to God. Left vulnerable, through ignorance, at almost every point of attack. Inheriting a wild passion for the poison, which makes it seem almost impossible, for one unused to resisting, to resist — a passion all the more fierce and dangerous, perhaps, because not suspected heretofore, not understood now. God pity all such young men! Their mothers have failed them; their teachers, both in the day and Sabbath-school, have failed them; the country, which is bound to protect them, has failed them. How are they to be saved from their almost inevitable doom?

“Well, old fellow, so you went to the picnic after all; and so did I; and we were invisible, each to the other, it seems, the whole afternoon. You had a time of it, I guess. And, by the way you tossed about and muttered all night, the night was as bad as the day. What set you into such a raging

headache? Why, man, you look as though you had had a fit of sickness. Your eyes are bloodshot. What do you suppose has upset you so?"

"Fate," said Eben Bruce, laconically, turning on his pillow, so that his eyes could not be seen by the sympathetic ones of Lloyd McLean. "How came *you* to go?" he asked, presently wondering vaguely in his mind if he had known that McLean was there, whether he would have sought him out, and the whole afternoon have been different.

"Oh! it was an eleventh hour reprieve. Haskell found that he couldn't carry out his schemes, so he let me off. I tried to find you, but they said you had gone out for the afternoon. I went out of my way to see if you were not at the doctor's office, smelling of his musty books, but he sat on the piazza, and said you hadn't been there. Then I flew, and had just time to swing myself on the train."

"He did not sit on the piazza when I was there," said Eben Bruce.

There was a shade of bitterness in his tone. "If the doctor had been at home!" That was what he thought. The fact is, the poor young man had not been brought up to be self-reliant, nor yet to lean on people who were strong enough to support his weight. And he made the curious blunder, too, which nearly all such characters do make, of supposing himself to be very strong in character, simply because he was obstinate.

"What did you do with yourself all the afternoon?" questioned Lloyd, bustling about to finish his somewhat belated toilet. "You fell in with a queer set, I should say! Were you with those fellows all the time? Poor victim! If I had had the ghost of a thought that you were on the ground I should have hunted you up. I stepped into very high-toned society; spent half the afternoon listening to the orator. He gave us a first-class temperance address right there on the cliff."

Poor Eben rolled over in the bed, and emitted something between a sigh and a groan.

"Poor fellow," said Lloyd, pausing long enough to give him a sympathetic glance, "your head is raging yet, isn't it? I wish you had been with us; we had a quiet time, and it would have done you more good than tramping around in the woods. What possessed those fellows to drag you off into the ravine? They are not particularly given to studying the beauties of nature, as a general thing. We had some rather interesting scenes up on the cliff. Durant knows how to talk, I can tell you; and that Josie Fleming succeeded in making almost a total abstinence fellow of me; I think if I should meet her twice more, I should be entirely converted."

"Josie Fleming! Is her influence in that line? It is more than her brother accomplished for me."

The latter part of the sentence was muttered, and lost on Lloyd, because of his interest in what he was about to say.

"Decidedly in that line; she talks like such a first-class idiot that you feel as though you must get 'twice' her line right

away in order to have an ounce of self-respect left. I'll tell you what it is, if I had a brother who lived as fast a life as they say Fred Fleming does, I would take care not to try to trample on him as she did with her tongue yesterday. You never heard a girl talk more like a simpleton! She received some splendid answers, though. I should like to hear Durant lecture. The fact is, Eben, you and I ought to have changed places yesterday; the company I fell into would have been more in your line; intellectual, you know. That crisp little old maid, who lives in the large, old-fashioned house back of the elms, advanced some ideas that were like a frosty evening after a hot day. You would enjoy her, Eben; she is original. Well, what do you mean to do next? You'll have to lie by to-day, I guess. You don't look fit to lift your head from the pillow. Shall I report you at headquarters as under the weather?"

"No," said Eben, "I'll get up when you get out of the way, and I'll go to the store as usual. What do they care for headaches?"

"He ought to have a rest of some sort," Lloyd McLean said to himself, as he closed the door on his friend. "He is getting completely knocked up over night work, I believe; but an afternoon in the woods has not done much for him; now I feel made over. I wish I had gone in search of Eben, and smuggled him into our set; that was the sort of company which he could have enjoyed."

Ah, me! how often afterward Lloyd McLean wished just that thing. Why need people be so blind? Why must the gay, light-hearted young fellow have chattered on that morning, so full of his own life, that he could not see there was more than a common headache holding his roommate prisoner? Oh, for a friend just then! Some one with wide open eyes, and wide open heart, and wise forethought, to have stepped in to his aid; some one who would have understood the unnatural look on the usually pale cheeks, and the unnatural gleam in the eyes. Mr. Durant was far on his Westward journey this morning.

Mr. Cleveland was busy among the grapevines in his garden, scanning them with critical eyes, and determining which needed training, and which needed pruning. Charlie Lambert was sitting in the door of his office smoking a cigar, and trying to decide how he would excuse himself to Miss Wainwright for not attending the projected prayer meeting, and Lloyd McLean, having hurried through his belated breakfast, was hurrying down street, whistling, his mind full of pleasant remembrances of his holiday. There was no one to watch the human vine which so sadly needed culture this morning. There was no one to understand the trembling of the unsteady hands which worked over the refractory buttons. Nobody noticed that he ate nothing at all at the uninvited breakfast-table; that he turned with loathing, even from the coffee, because it was both cold and weak; nobody would have cared if they had seen him. There was a letter awaiting him from his mother; but it was brief, and told him that she felt over-

worked and ill, and that she did not recognize his last letter at first, because of the rough, ungainly appearance of the cheap envelope. Did he really feel reduced to this? Why, yes; she supposed it was as good as a poor clerk could afford; she must remember that they were less than nothing now; it did not matter what such people used, she supposed. He curled his lip bitterly over the words. In his present unnatural mood they seemed to him to say much more than they did. He crumpled the letter in a heap, thrust it into his pocket, and went out, saying aloud:

"No, it doesn't matter; nothing matters. I can never be anything now; I need not try."

Doctor Brandon passed him, with a hurried, preoccupied bow. It had occurred to the doctor once or twice to wonder whether he could not get those young men into his Bible class, and he meant, some time, when he had leisure, to drop in and have a chat with them; but on this particular

morning he was deep in thought over a theological question on which he had just been reading an exhaustive argument, and he went with swift steps, over the very road which Eben Bruce must take. They might have walked together, and words might have been dropped which would have changed the history of the day. Who knows? I know that they didn't. And that Eben Bruce halted, for the first time in his life, at the door of a gilded saloon; which occupied the corner around which Doctor Brandon had passed in safety, and went in and ordered a glass of brandy!

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CHAPTER X.

FRUIT FROM THE PICNIC.

IN Mrs. Copeland's pretty little dining-room there was trouble. Mrs. Copeland was polishing the silver teaspoons, which had worn themselves thin in her grandmother's service, and were few in number, and represented the very small stock of silver which the Copeland family possessed. There were two bright spots glowing on the lady's cheeks, not caused by the warmth of the room, for the fire had died down; the windows were set wide open, for Kate Hartzell had a duster in her hand, and had just been using it faithfully. Her face wore a distressed look, and the tears in her eyes were bent on coming to the surface if they could. Fannie was there, in a trim morning dress, preparing to iron

a ruffled and tucked garment, which needed time and skill.

"Of course, if you are resolved upon it, I have nothing more to say. I have no right to restrain you, even if I felt inclined, and I am sure we do not want you to stay with us, if you prefer to go; but I must say I am surprised."

Kate struggled with her voice to keep it clear.

"Mrs. Copeland, I don't know how to tell you how hard it will be to do it. I have looked forward to my home here this winter with such pleasure. Surely you know that I would not leave such a place as this for such a home as I am going to if I could see any other way to do."

"I don't understand such talk as that," the lady answered coldly. "You were aware that you had a father and brother when you came here; they are in no worse circumstances, I suppose, than they were when I took you into my home; I don't see how they well could be, I am sure. I don't know why you should suddenly be

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impressed with the idea that it is your duty to go back and grovel with them. I should think your self-respect would hold you from doing so. It is unaccountable to me, I must say!" While she spoke the color deepened on her cheeks, and her indignation seemed to rise at every word. "I am sure I have spared no pains to make you feel at home and happy; and to give you advantages; and Fannie has treated you more like a companion than like a servant. She even arranged that you should attend the picnic in her company, and have as pleasant a time as the rest of them."

But there was something in this sentence which made Fannie blush; she could hardly help remembering how little she had contributed to Kate's happiness on that occasion.

"O, mamma!" she murmured, "never mind that."

"I am not minding it, daughter," Mrs. Copeland said, with dignity. "It is of no consequence, of course; people don't do such things for the sake of the gratitude which

they will receive in return. I am only suggesting to Kate that she has had certain advantages here which she would not be likely to have in every home."

"I have had everything, Mrs. Copeland, and I shall never be able to tell you how grateful I am for all that you have done for me in the last few months. I can never forget it. I go away because I think I ought. I did not know I was shirking my duty when I left my father and brother. I could not see that I had any duty toward them. I did not know a thing to do; but now I have discovered ways in which I might possibly reach them. I can not help thinking that I ought to try. O, Mrs. Copeland, they are human beings, and they may be saved!"

It was not possible to be deaf to the piteous cry there was in the young girl's voice. Mrs. Copeland felt it and was silent for a full minute. Silent but not convinced. She spoke coldly at last.

"You can help them better by retaining your respectability than by sinking to their

level. How any girl of your capabilities, and with your opportunity for escape, can think for a moment of dropping back into that hovel to live like the pigs, is more than I can imagine. There must be something wrong."

She had talked herself into indignation again. Kate had no words ready. The tears were having their way now in spite of her.

Fannie ironed with rapid hands, and the silver spoons took such a polishing as they had not received in months. It was Fannie who found voice first.

"Mamma, will you let that Haines girl come and try it, if Kate goes away?"

"No, Fannie, I will not. I have no time nor heart for any more experiments of the sort. I have given all the clothing I could spare to Kate; and your father is not in circumstances to do more than we have done; besides, as I say, I have no heart for the effort. What does it amount to? We may as well determine to save our sympathy and get along alone."

If Mrs. Copeland had known how every word she uttered burned in the heart of the desolate girl before her, she would have closed her lips firmly and let not one escape. The trouble was, she considered herself an ill-used woman. She had been kind to Kate Hartzell since the first time she saw and was struck with her pure, sad face, and inquired who she was, and learned with intense dismay and deep pity that she was the daughter of Old Hartzell the drunkard, who had been living with an aunt until now. The aunt was dead, and the daughter had come home to misery and poverty such as the respectably poor can not even imagine.

Mrs. Copeland was not a benevolent woman in the large sense of that term. She was a loving and faithful mother, an excellent housekeeper, a member of the church, who was generally in her pew on Sabbath morning, a member of the Missionary Society, giving her ten cents a month without outward grudging, when the collectors called for it; but she never at-

tended the meetings—for lack of time, she said, and honestly thought it was true, and she occasionally remarked to Fannie, or to a very intimate friend, that if the ladies would interest themselves in the poor of the town, and save their ten-cent pieces to dress up some of the Sunday-school children, she thought it would be quite as well. She had what is called a warm heart—that is, when any case of actual suffering came to her ears, she was ready with her sympathy and with what means she had to help in an emergency; but anything like systematic warm-heartedness, anything like going out into the world and looking right and left for the people who possibly needed sympathy, and flannel, and beefsteak, never entered her mind. The poor must come to her, must represent their needs, and make good their claim to something like respectability if they wanted her help.

The widest step out of the beaten track that she had taken was to reach after this Kate Hartzell, knowing nothing about her but her interesting face, and neat dress,

and the fact that she had sought out the Sabbath-school, and joined a class, and learned her lesson. Mrs. Copeland, watching her one Sabbath, had resolved to experiment. Doctor Copeland was a physician with an extensive country practice, a hard country ride, and a large class of poor patients whom he grumbled about and served faithfully. He managed, as the years went by, to get for himself a neat home, and to support his family comfortably. It had taken management and thrift to do this. Doctor Copeland had been heard more than once to say that if it had not been for his wife's excellent seconding, they could never have done as well as they had—that Eastwood was the best town he knew of for a doctor to keep busy and poor. However, by dint of very careful economy they had sent Fannie for one year to an excellent school, and they had ambitions which, as yet, they hardly dared mention, even to each other, for their one boy, Holly.

There was certainly reason for economy in the Copeland family. This was why

Mrs. Copeland had hesitated, even when her sympathies were drawn out toward the girl who came every Sabbath to church, looking neat and clean, and who came from the Flats! Could she take her from that dreadful place into her home, and teach her to be a notable housekeeper, and teach her to sew, and to darn, and to be at home in all the mysteries of home life?

What a blessing that would be for the girl! She could dress her out of Fannie's outgrown clothing, for Fannie was tall, and Kate was short, and Fannie was in school and had left many things at home not suitable for school life; and it was lonely in her kitchen, with Fannie always away, and Holly at school, and Doctor Copeland riding over the country, night as well as day. If the girl proved to be neat and quiet and respectable as she looked, might she not become in time a comfort? There had been much thinking, and some talking with the busy doctor, who was disposed at all times to think that what his wife thought, must be the right thing, and

at last, with many misgivings, she ventured.

The few people who knew anything about it had shaken their heads at her, and said that it was a hazardous experiment to take a girl from the Flats; but Mrs. Copeland, having resolved, was not one to give much thought to shaking heads. Kate was sent for and interviewed, and came promptly into the Copeland kitchen, feeling a little like one who had been imprisoned in a dungeon, and had suddenly gone to heaven! She did not grow into being a comfort. She jumped instantly into that character. She had not been in the Copeland home for twenty-four hours before Holly became her firm friend and ally, and Doctor Copeland pronounced her a handy creature, and Mrs. Copeland congratulated herself that she had certainly done a kind and benevolent thing for the girl, and a comfortable thing for herself. Thenceforward for some months life went on smoothly at the Copelands. Then Fannie came home; tall, beautiful girl that she

was, with a cheery heart and a sunny voice, and took kindly to the interloper, finding it comfortable to have her share of the kitchen work done for her by deft and willing fingers; finding it pleasanter to bestow little cheery favors, which cost nothing, on one who was so grateful and so helpful. The first break to the comfort had been when the mother resolved that Kate should have a holiday, and go to the picnic, where all the town was going, and that Fannie should take her with her and look after her a little. She had not meant that Kate should be considered a companion of her daughter, exactly, though she had not given a great deal of thought to that matter; it was just a sudden remembrance of the fact that the girl was young, and never had chances to make one of merry parties like other girls, and a sudden resolve that for once she should go. The woods were ample, there was plenty of lunch and Kate would look after the basket, and the napkins and the dishes, as Fannie never did, and Fannie could see

that Kate had what help she needed in getting through the ravine, and, for the rest, young people could take care of themselves. Mrs. Copeland gave very little thought to the whims of society; in fact, she was above many of them.

Well, as you know, the girl went to the picnic; and Mrs. Copeland looked after the party complacently, and said that Kate looked as neat and appeared as well as any of them; and she felt pleased with herself all the afternoon and for days afterward. Whenever she looked at Kate or thought of her, it seemed to her that she had done a nice thing in rescuing the girl from the miseries of the Flats and setting her down among respectable people, and giving her opportunities for holidays and nice times.

Now, five days after the picnic was supposed to be a thing of the past, came this sudden revelation from Kate. She had been thinking about it for several days, and now she had resolved that her duty was to go back to the tumble-down house

on the Flats, the worst one in the row, and help her sick sister-in-law to try to make a home for the father and brother. She had heard that the sister-in-law was sick, and that things were at their worst, but she had not seen her duty clear, nor known, indeed, of anything that she could do until now. Perhaps she could do nothing now, but, at least, she could, and must, try. And Mrs. Copeland was astonished, and hurt, and indignant. She thought she was being badly treated.

Kate found words at last.

"Mrs. Copeland, there is nothing in life too hard for me to do for you, to show you my gratitude, if I knew anything to do. But I can not get away from the feeling that I must try to save father and John. Father is growing old; he is sick; he can not live long. Can I have him die a drunkard, and make no effort to save him? Mother went to Heaven, Mrs. Copeland, and she begged my father to meet her there, and I am afraid he never will; and the only daughter he had has deserted

him, and is living in comfort, while he draws every day nearer to the dreadful end. I mustn't do it, Mrs. Copeland. My eyes have been opened; I *dare* not do it. I will never forget what you have done for me, and if there is any way in which I can ever pay it, you may be sure I will. But I know that I must go. I will not take any of the clothes you gave me. I will leave them for you to help somebody else, as you have me, and I will not go while you have company, or until you can spare me as well as not; but I must go and try. And oh! Mrs. Copeland, you are a Christian; I beg you to pray for father and John. John was so handsome and noble once, and father was kind and good."

The tears came now in a perfect passion, and had their way without check for some minutes. They did not soften Mrs. Copeland. She had but little knowledge of human nature; but little acquaintance with the depths of the human heart. She saw, in this outburst, only a touch of the sentimentalism which she believed to be rain-

pant in all young people, unless held in severe check. It took a somewhat peculiar form, it is true; the girl must have gotten hold of some trashy book, which had given her a desire to become a heroine, and this was the most startling guise in which she could bring it to pass. She saw no possible good that could come from the girl's going down among that set to live. Here it was only yesterday that she was congratulating herself, as she stood at the corner, and waited for the father to reel by, over the fact that she had rescued the girl from a life of shame. What was the use in trying to do benevolent things if they ended so ignominiously? As she thought it all over, her cold indignation grew.

"There is no need for you to make such alarming sacrifices, Kate. You are welcome to all that has been given you. They might have been bestowed, it is true, on some one who would have valued them more, but they certainly will not be given away again by me. Take them and do what you

like with them. And if you are resolved on a course which I think wrong and ungrateful, you may go at once. I do not want any delay on my account. It would simply be a trial to me to see you around."

There had come another into the family group during the last ten minutes. This was Holly, a boy of fourteen, large for his years, and manly looking. His eyes, which were brimming with fun when he dashed into the room, changed into wondering ones, as he glanced from one to the other of this excited trio, and grew grave and troubled as he listened. Then at last they flashed. He came with quick steps over to Kate's side. He had heard her last passionate cry to be understood.

"I believe in you, Kate; I don't want you to go away, not a bit; but I guess you are doing right. I know you are, if you think so, for you always do what's right. I hope you will get your father and brother to reform; and I'll help all I can. I'm going to do all of that kind of work I can; I've made up my mind."

What the great brown eyes, that smiled on him through tears, said to the boy, I shall not attempt to say. Speech was beyond Kate just then, but she laid her hand on his arm as she passed, and he looked into her eyes, and nodded, and seemed to understand.

"Holly," said his mother, coldly, "have you been reading dime novels, too?"

"Mamma," said Fannie, "this is some of the fruit of your picnic plan. I saw Kate getting dreadfully excited over the temperance talk. If she had not gone to that picnic, all this would not have happened."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

TO attempt to give you a description of the room into which Kate Hartzell stepped, toward the close of a dull November day, would be quite beyond my powers. And yet certainly you ought to have some idea of it, if you are going to be interested in the human beings who called it home. It was simply a hovel. The predominant thing was filth. The two small-paned windows had lost, between them, above and below, seven lights of glass. Outside, a drizzling rain was falling, and sometimes the wind roused itself and sent spiteful gusts in at the broken windows. A weak attempt had been made to keep the intruder out by stuffing an old hat, and an old towel, and a wad of brown

paper, and, in one instance, a rusty and leaky tin pan, through the apertures. There were three chairs in the room—all of them broken; there was an ill-used, discouraged-looking stove; there was a cupboard, with one door hanging at the hinges, and the other gone entirely, inside of which straggled a few cracked and broken dishes; there was a table, of the old-fashioned kind, with one leaf gone; there was, in the corner, what by courtesy, or from force of habit, was called a bed, and that I will not attempt to describe. If you have seen the beds in the homes of drunkards, you have no need of descriptions; and if you have not, words will fail to give you an idea of them. Now you have the sole furniture which the room contained, and yet none knows better than I how entirely I have failed to give you a picture of its desolation. I can not show you the dirt in the corners, the cobwebs, the fly-marks and mud-marks on the windows, the stains on the floor, the grease on the table. These things you must imagine. Kate saw them.

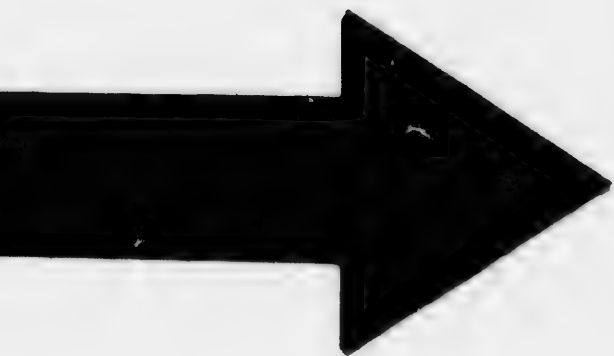
As to the human beings, there were three of them. Before I describe them to you, let me take you back only a decade. I want to introduce you to a handsome store in a busy town, almost large enough to be called a city—a drug store, glittering with its show of colored glass and brilliant liquids, and arranged with that regard to lovely combinations of color which is common in first-class drug stores. There is at one end a handsome soda fountain, with all the various cooling syrups and elegant appliances of first-class establishments. Just behind the counter stands a middle-aged man, with a smiling face and pleasant voice. He is somewhat portly in appearance and there is a flush on his face, and a look in his eyes, that to people who are on the alert for these signs, speak of a form of fashionable living, which is more or less dangerous. Still, nobody ever applies the term, so far as I know, in speaking of him. This is Mr. Joel Hartzell, one of the public-spirited citizens of the town. His name heads all the subscription lists

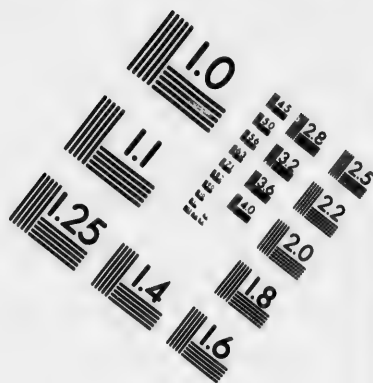
for town improvements, for a new organ for the church, or a new suit of clothes for a home missionary box. Mr. Hartzell is genial, benevolent, kind-hearted, a friend to the poor, and a lover of the choice wines and brandies which he keeps for medicinal purposes.

In that hovel, which I have been attempting to bring before your mental vision, sits an old, bleary-eyed, red-nosed drunkard. He is trying, in a feeble, discouraged way, to dry the ragged shirt which has been soaked through and through in the driving rain. He has no shirt to change with it. He is at this moment so much under the influence of liquor that he does not notice the spark which has snapped from the fitful fire, and lodged on his shoulder, in a dry spot, and is slowly feeding itself into a flame. But for an exclamation and prompt action of Kate Hartzell, the moment she enters the door, there might have been a tragedy for the morning papers at Eastwood. This is Old Joe Hartzell, the most hopeless drunkard who lives on the Flats.

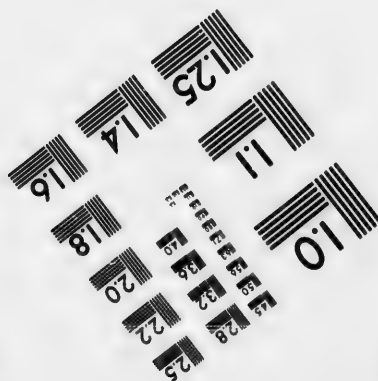
So much for ten years of down grade.







A resolution test chart featuring several groups of horizontal and vertical lines of varying thicknesses and spacings. Each group is accompanied by a numerical value indicating the resolution. The values include 1.0, 1.1, 1.25, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.2, 3.6, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.6, 6.3, 7.1, 8.0, and 9.0. The chart is used to measure the resolving power of imaging systems.



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The property went first; went foolishly, because of a transaction that Joel Hartzell, with clear brains, would never have made. The last scene in the handsome house, on Arch street, was a funeral service, which committed the body of a broken-hearted wife to the rest of the grave. She died of a broken heart—not because the money was gone—for she was a true woman, and could have rallied from that. It was because she knew how it had gone, and why, and foresaw that this was only the beginning of the end.

But just go back to that store a moment. There is an unusually fine-looking fellow leaning over the counter, in earnest conversation with his father. The benevolent face of the father is clouded a little. He is very fond of John, his only son and heir; but John's demands for money are becoming alarmingly frequent, and the father is almost afraid that his boy is getting to be "fast." There are times when he half-wishes that the temperance fanatics would get hold of the boy; anything would be better than

to have him a drunkard. Not that there is probably any danger of that. He never hints this half-wish to the son; on the contrary, he sneers, in a good-natured, benevolent sort of way at the wild, and preposterous, and unconstitutional, and impracticable schemes of the fanatics, and the bright-eyed, well-dressed, gentlemanly son gets the money, sooner or later, all he needs. On this particular afternoon he goes away smiling, with his check in his pocket. This is John Hartzell, a college youth, who, on rare occasions, when he takes time to study, leads his class, and shows flashes of genius in more directions than one; whose father is proud of him, whose mother idolizes him, who is called a "good fellow" by the boys, and is a favorite with the girls, and over whom grave men occasionally shake their heads, but admit that he has talent of no uncommon order.

In that aforesaid hovel, among the rags of the dreadful bed, there lies, face downward, hat and boots still on, and both covered with mud, a wreck of a man, in a

drunken sleep. That is John Hartzell, who is really a worse drunkard than his father, because, though he is oftener sober, he is far uglier and more dangerous when he is not sober; and his sober days are growing fewer and farther between. So much for ten years of self-indulgence in an inherited habit of sin.

Go back again. Let me introduce you to another home. It is evening, and the parlors are lighted, and there is a select company to celebrate the seventeenth birthday of the petted darling of the home. Not a wealthy home, but an elegant one, with the remains of what had been worth all about it. The "darling" is the only child of a widowed mother, and is bright, and beautiful, and bewitching enough to fascinate a stronger brain than John Hartzell's.

It is a winter night, but she is all in white, because, appropriate or not, she will not wear anything but white on her birthday. She is going to wear white on her birthday until she is eighty years old, she gaily says, and, as John Hartzell looks down

on her, in her rose-colored ribbons, he hopes she will, and that he will be there to see her. She looks like a fairy to him now, and in her hand she holds a goblet, in which a red liquid glows and sparkles.

"Try it," she said, with a winning smile. "Mamma made it herself, and I know it is good. Mamma's home-made wines always have the name of being better than other people's."

What nonsense! For, mind you, John Hartzell's reply is that he has never tasted wine. Up to this point he has been brought up by a mother who, though weak and not well-posted, is yet afraid, and has tried feebly to shield her boy.

"Nonsense!" says the siren, "as though home-made wine could hurt anybody! It isn't like the stuff you buy. Just taste it. Do you think *I* would offer you anything that would hurt you?"

There is reproach in the tone; and John bends his handsome head, and, with murmured words, half-nonsense, half-earnestness, about doing anything that she wanted,

he drinks his first glass of wine at her hands! Poor thing! she does not know what she has done. She is ignorant alike of the certainties and the possibilities. Mother and teacher and preacher have failed her. She has come up to seventeen years without knowledge on this fateful subject. But back in that hovel, there is a woman with a faded and soiled and torn gray calico dress, without collar or ribbon, with hair combed straight back from a drawn forehead and sunken, sorrowful eyes. Over her temple is a suspicious mark; John struck her once, when he had been drinking; he would not do it even now, when sober; if he is really *sober* any more. Her face is tied around with a coarse, brown towel. She took cold out in the rain trying to drag her husband in from yesterday's storm; she has faceache now — a fierce, grinding pain, that drives her at times to the very verge of insanity. She expects, no, she faintly hopes, that something white will be found for her to wear once more, when they lay her in her cof-

fin; if it is so that she can have a coffin. For she believes that somebody beside John will have to pay for it if she does. And this is the white-robed fairy in rose-colored ribbons. So much for a few years of reaping one's own sowing! What if the sowing *was* in ignorance? The harvest is just as sure. Where is the weak and wickedly ignorant mother? Gone to her grave. Thank God, that so many, even of the mistaken mothers, are covered by the grave before the harvests of their sowing are fully ripe! One does not want *mothers* to suffer, if it can in any way be helped.

So now you know the people on whom Kate Hartzell looked that afternoon when she came home to stay. Kate Hartzell who had been only eight years old when her mother died and the wreck came to the household. There had been a widowed sister of the mother who had carried her away, and had brought her up in neatness and poverty, and taught her to sew on the dresses which she was forever making, and to read and write and cipher

as far as she herself was able to take her, and to hate rum and all its belongings and suggestions, and then had died suddenly and left her to hunt out the father who had buried his manhood in this far-away town of Eastwood, and was known in the town only as Old Joe Hartzell, another drunkard from somewhere, who had come to live on the Flats. Kate had been only a few weeks in the dreadful home when Mrs. Copeland's curious eyes had sought her out, and Mrs. Copeland herself had embarked on a benevolent venture, which had speedily brought her large returns, until that fatal day when she planned and executed a holiday for her faithful helper, and Kate had gone and returned with new ideas which had worked her mischief, until now it had culminated on this dreary afternoon. Kate had come home with a package under her arm, and her trunk was to follow her. She had tried to compromise; she had asked to go twice a week to the Flats, spend an evening with her sick and sorrowful sister-in-law, try to get an

influence over her dreadful father and worse brother, and to help them in what ways she could. No; Mrs. Copeland would have none of it. There should be no running back and forth from the Flats to her house. She would have in her home no girl who would have anything to do with such a disreputable locality. She had rescued Kate, and been glad to do it; but now if Kate preferred that sort of society, she must make her choice. It was all romantic nonsense to talk about "helping" or "influencing" such as these. They were beyond help; and Kate was a young girl who had been respectably brought up, and should keep herself clean at all hazards.

And Kate had steadily held to her new ideas, and had gone. Yet how glad she would have been to have felt free from responsibility concerning them!

More glad than Mrs. Copeland could imagine. The bare remembrance that she was related to such a home as she knew that one to be, filled her with loathing. She would have been glad to forget it.

When she first heard of the home-coming of the brother and his wife, there had been a gleam of hope that things would be changed for the better.

It took but a few weeks to determine that they were much worse. Her visits to the house were at first few and far between, and then ceased altogether.

She had bitterly blamed her brother's wife. Why, being a woman, with a husband to care for her, had she allowed the miserable home to fall into even a worse state than she found it? Why did she not at least sweep the room and wash the floor and make the miserable rags with which she had to do, passably clean? Thus much even *she* had tried to do during the few weeks that she had spent there with her father. She always shuddered when she thought of those weeks. "But I," she would say to herself, "did not have John to help me," and it took three different visits when she came in contact with him at his best, before she learned to fully realize the fact that John Hartzell was a wreck. She re-

membered the handsome young man so well!

Of late, watching him often, as he reeled by, and taking counsel of her few weeks of bitter experience in a drunkard's home, and with wide open eyes going over the experiences of her few visits there, since she left it, her heart had grown less hard toward her sister-in-law.

She remembered that even sweeping could not be done without a broom, and that brooms cost money.

Washing called for soap, or, failing in that, certainly water. She remembered with a pang how far the water had to be brought. What if John refused to bring it?

There was another point which she thought of later. How were clothes to be washed, even though soap and water and a vessel in which to wash them were at hand, if there were none with which to cover the bodies while the cleansing was going on! Oh, there were problems connected with this story of the filthy habits of the poor which had never entered

Kate's mind before, and which has not apparently entered the minds of older heads than hers. Kate's aunt had been poor. She had made common dresses for busy people, who had no time to make their own, and little money with which to pay others, and for fashionable people who had too many ways for their money to be willing to pay other than the most meagre prices for common dresses; and economy, rigid and vigilant, had been necessary to the widow and her adopted child. But there is poverty and *poverty*, and Kate Hartzell had known nothing about its worst phases until she became an inmate of her father's house.

Mrs. John Hartzell looked up at her entrance; a dull, hopeless look; there was no lighting of the heavy face at sight of her; there had been no sympathy between these two. But the very fact that Kate had begun to study how she could help, had opened her eyes to the knowledge that there were difficulties great, and perhaps insurmountable, against doing anything. This

awakened pity and sympathy for her sister-in-law.

"Well," said Mrs. John Hartzell, "what now?"

The tone said more than that; it questioned what this fine lady could want here; it resented her having come to spy out the nakedness of the land.

"Annie," said Kate, laying down the bundle she carried and going close to her sister-in-law, "I have come home to stay, and to help save these two; let us take hold, you and I, and do it."

I can give you no conception of the force in her voice; intensified, probably, by the fact that it was sunk to a whisper.

The wan-faced woman looked at her for a moment, startled as one might have been over the words of a maniac; wonder and doubt and fear and a curious little quiver of hope, trembling through the maze, and then her lips, which had long been schooled to a certain kind of self-control, began to quiver. Suddenly she pressed both hands to her face and burst into such a passion of

sobs as Kate had never heard before. Those words of hers were the first sympathetic and at the same time hopeful ones that the poor woman had heard in five years.

Old Joe Hartzell turned himself slowly around in his rickety chair, gazed with bleared eyes on the two, the broken, ragged, forlorn woman, her face buried in her hands, her whole form convulsed with the excess of her emotion, and the fair young girl in her neat dress and hat and gloves, with such a look of pity and resolve on her face as might have given even Old Joe a gleam of hope had he been sober enough to read the language; but all he said was:

"What's the row now? There's always something; women are all the time making an everlasting row!"

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CHAPTER XII.

"WHAT IS THE USE?"

REFORMS of nearly all description are apt to have such small beginnings that many people do not recognize them as reforms at all. Commonplace beginnings—and herein lies the difficulty in getting some persons to work. They are willing to do grand, heroic things, but the bare and wearying commonplaces of life cannot win them to enthusiasm, nor to effort.

In the Hartzell hovel the beginning was very small. In fact, it had to do with housecleaning!

"Let us make the room over new," said Kate; and the sister-in-law looked first at the room and then at the speaker, incredulity and disgust on her face.

"How?" she said; and then, with energy:

"I tell you, you can't do it, Kate Hartzell. It isn't a room that is capable of being put in order; and, if it were, there is nothing to do it with—nothing at all. I haven't had an ounce of soap in six weeks; and all the water we have I drag up from Jones' cistern, down at the corner, and he swears at me every time I go. And as for rags to clean with, you would think we might have enough of them, but we haven't. Even *rags* are scarce in this house. You don't know anything about it. I do. I came down very fast when I started; and yet, after all, it took me a long while to reach the very bottom, and realize it; but I have done that for three years. You would better take your trunk full of pretty dresses and get away to respectability, and stay there. I shall not grudge it to you any more. I'll believe now that you had a heart to feel and to try, if there had been any use."

It was morning. A clear, cold autumn morning. The rain was over, and the sky was blue and the day was bright. Old Joe

had slipped away before Kate opened her eyes that morning. It was late before she closed them. She had had bitter tears to shed, though she tried to hide them from the desolate woman who lay beside her on the rags. There was a little cupboard sort of room, opening from the main one, and there the wife and sister had hidden themselves, leaving the two drunkards to grovel outside together. Old Joe, as I said, had slipped away breakfastless, and John had growled, and sworn, and kicked his way through the kitchen, an hour later, and told Kate that she needn't come there with her airs—that they wanted none of her—and staggered away breakfastless. There had been literally nothing in that house to eat.

Within Kate's pocket lay a little purse—her own, the relic of happy days, when she had change to use at her pleasure. Not much, it is true, and managed always with careful economy. But her very own. Within it lay, at this very moment, a treasure—a silver dollar. It had a peculiar history. She had gone out from the home which had

recently sheltered her, in coldness and disfavor. Mrs. Copeland had not relented; she had believed herself to be an ill-used woman to the last. She had schooled herself to believe that Kate had grown tired of the routine and the restraints of thoroughly respectable life, and pined for the freedom of the Flats. She had said to Fannie that that was what came of trying to lift people whose tastes and early associations were low and groveling. She had no knowledge of the home of wealth in which Kate's childhood had been spent. As for Fannie, she echoed her mother, of course; at least, enough to be thoroughly vexed with Kate; though she stoutly held to the statement that she believed the girl thought she was doing her duty; and constantly affirmed that that unfortunate picnic was to blame for all the trouble. Feeling thus, it is not to be supposed that they in any way lightened the burden of Kate's home-going. She had received no wages since she had been with Mrs. Copeland; being only too glad to accept of an offer which

fed and clothed her in respectability. Mrs. Copeland had certainly been very kind to her; had more than paid regular wages, in the wardrobe she had helped to furnish. But Kate had not a cent of money. And yet that silver dollar lay in her little purse. I am coming to its story.

It was the boy Holly who followed her to the gate that afternoon when she turned away weeping from Mrs. Copeland's cold —

"I am sure, Kate, I wish you well, although you have shown an ungrateful spirit; but I must say that I hardly expect to hear well of you."

Then came Holly, regret on his face, indignation flashing from his eyes.

"Never mind, Kate," he said, "mother doesn't understand; but I believe in you. I always shall. And I shall think up ways to help you, too. And, Kate, here is my dollar. It is my spend-as-you-like money. I don't have to give any account of it. Father says he expects that I will spend it foolishly, but I must learn by experience. So you mustn't refuse it," for Kate had

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drawn back, her fair face flushing crimson. "I want you to take it as a sort of pledge that I am going to help. Folks need money to do things with. I intend to have a good deal of it when I am a man. I am going to earn it, and spend it, too, for things of this kind. This is just a beginning, and you helped me to begin. Some day, maybe, you will remember that, and be real glad."

Was such logic as that to be withstood? To Kate it sounded almost prophetic, and sent a warm thrill through her heart. She reached forth her hand and took the money.

"It shall help," she said; "and Holly, boy, I won't forget your words. I will remember that I have a friend who is helping. Good-by, Holly!"

The boy looked after her, and swallowed hard, and shut his teeth, and clenched his hands. He and Kate had been warm friends. He did not like to see her going out from his father's house in this fashion.

"Mean old rum," he said between his

shut teeth. "I hate it; I'll fight it, everywhere and always. When I'm a man I'll fight it with votes and money and speeches; and I'll fight it now. A boy can do some things. Kate sha'n't work all alone."

O, mother, with your cold face and disappointed heart, going about your neat kitchen getting the evening meal, missing the neat presence which has given you aid and comfort for the months past; sore over the sense of failure in your one decided effort at benevolence, do you really think that you have failed? Look out at your boy, standing at the gate, watching, through the rain and gathering mist, the retreating figure of poor Kate Hartzell, who has gone out on her mission without a kind word from you. If you could look through the mists of years, and see what the to-morrows are to bring to you and yours, would you drop on your knees now and thank God for letting you bring Kate Hartzell into your home, to hold your boy for you, and for God and the right? How do you know how far to-day will reach?

So the dollar had furnished Kate Hartzell and her sister-in-law with a breakfast; a very small portion of it, indeed, had done that, Kate saying to herself, as she passed the shining sphere in exchange for bread:

"It is helping; for if we are at work we must eat, and there is work to do."

The breakfast eaten, they stood in that dreadful room together, and the worn-out woman, bruised, body and soul, gave forth the words which you heard a few moments ago, the closing sentence, "if there had been any use," being the sad refrain of all the hopes of her broken heart.

Kate drew a long breath, as of one taking in strength from somewhere for the task before her, and said:

"I shall not go back, and we will make this room over, and this home; we *will* succeed, Annie. Let us say that it shall be. God will help us, Annie Hartzell, and God never fails."

"I don't know anything about God," said poor Annie Hartzell; but she did not speak the name irreverently.

Kate's next word would have seemed to the many utterly foreign to the subject.

"Annie," she said, "haven't you a broom?"

"A broom!" said Mrs Hartzell, scorn in her tone, "no, I haven't. I had one, but last week your father came in, worse than usual, and he broke it into bits, and burned it up. There was no need for it, either. I had a good fire that night. I had been out half the afternoon picking up bits which the woodyard wagons dropped."

Kate could not help a little shiver running through her frame, but she spoke briskly:

"We must have a broom, and a fire, and some hot water, and some soap; I have something that will make rags. I will go down street, and get the things. Annie, will you set the furniture out, and take down the bedstead, and get things ready while I am gone?"

"What do you mean to do?"

"Clean house."

"What is the use? There is nothing to

keep it clean with, and nothing to make it comfortable. I tell you I know it can't be done. I am older than you; I am a hundred years old at the least, I think. And when we first went down, before we got so low as this, I tried to keep things decent; tried hard, and failed. Up to the time that John resolved to come back to his father, I had a little hope; after that I lost it all. John's father always influenced him to the worst."

She did not mean to be cruel. She did not know that Kate's heart would wince at this; she did not suppose that there was an atom of love left in her heart for the lost father; and she did not remember just then that her own girlish hand offered the first drop of liquor that John had ever tasted. Kate remembered it; her aunt had told her, and dwelt on it bitterly. It had made Kate feel hard toward her sister-in-law all her life. It made her face burn at this moment, but she held her lips close, and went on with her preparations to go down town.

"Nevertheless, let us try again," she said. "Let us begin by being clean; we can not feel ourselves to be respectable until we are as clean as we can be. We will find ways to make it more comfortable. I will work and earn money. I have a trade, Annie; I can cut and make common dresses; and uncommon ones, too, I believe, if I could get a chance."

"Who will give you a chance to make any sort, so long as you live on the Flats?"

"I don't know," Kate said, her lips quivering a little. "Somebody will; I feel sure of it. There is a way out, Annie; only let us resolve to get out."

"Tell me this, Kate Hartzell—what put this into your mind? Who sent you here?"

Kate was dressed now, even to her gloves. She looked unlike anything that was in the habit of issuing from any door on the Flats. She had her hand on the door-knob, but she turned and looked full into her sister-in-law's eyes, and answered her steadily and solemnly, "God!"

Then she went swiftly away.

You do not know, and you can hardly be made to understand, what a day that was to Kate Hartzell. It may be that you are skilled in the art of housecleaning, yet I venture to say that you would hardly know how to have managed such a form of it as this. Yet it was managed. By six o'clock of that same day you would not have known the room, had you been familiar with it as it appeared in the morning. The shelf in the corner had been cleared of the accumulation of years, and scrubbed clean, and covered with a white paper. The cupboard, where the few dishes were, had been treated in the same manner. Only the remaining half door had been taken off its hinges, and set up as a shelf.

Kate handled the sheets of paper lovingly. They were left of a roll which Holly had bought her when she helped him in some of his pattern cutting.

"There!" he had said, with satisfaction, as the last pattern was drawn, "now what

will I do with all that paper? I got fifty times more paper than I needed, of course. But it was cheap; Jerry gave it to me. You take it, Kate. I have no place to put it, and mother won't have it lying round. You will do something nice with it some time, I dare say; you always do with bits of things."

So Kate had laughingly taken her gift and laid it away, and now she was spreading it on the shelves of the corner cupboard! Holly was helping; it gave her a warm feeling in her sad heart to think of it. The floor had been scrubbed, and the table, and even the rickety chairs. The bedclothes had been washed, every rag of them, and had been blowing in the wind and sunshine all the afternoon, to the great astonishment of the dwellers on the Flats. The bed was made up neatly now, and its nakedness covered with a blue and white patchwork quilt, which had been the work of Kate's early girlhood, and had been lying in the depths of her trunk waiting for this hour. The stove had been

blackened until it shone, and, altogether, what with the white curtain at the window and the white cloth on the table, both made from a roll in Kate's trunk, Mrs. Hartzell, who was arrayed in a fresh brown calico of Kate's, and who sat by the table gazing around upon it all, confessed to herself that it made a wonderful difference. But her face was still in shadow.

"What will it all amount to, Kate? Haven't you tried something of the kind before? I have. One day I cleaned everything up; that was two years ago, and there were more things to clean, though I thought then that everything was as bad as it could be. But I made it all nice, and then I set the table as nicely as I could, and baked some potatoes and fried a little sausage that a neighbor had sent me. He promised me in the morning when he went out that he would try again, and I meant to help him all I could; and when he came he could just stagger into the room, and lay himself, boots and all, just as you saw him last night, on my clean bed; and if I

touched him, he growled and swore at me. The potatoes burned up, and the sausage shrivelled away to grease; I never ate a bite that night. The next morning he was off, and took with him the bag of potatoes that I had earned the day before washing windows for a woman! That is the last time I ever tried. I knew it would be of no use, and I know it now."

Kate came and stood by her sister's chair.

"I never tried much," she said, humbly; "when I first came home it was all so different from anything I had ever known, that it was awful. Father would stay away all night, and I was afraid; afraid for my life. There were so many dreadful noises, and such mean-looking men hanging around; father was never cross to me, but he drank all the time. I tried to get meals ready for him, and he never came to them; not once, to sit down to the table for the weeks that I was here. And then Mrs. Copeland saw me and gave me that chance, and I rejoiced over it. I thought

I should never come back where father was again; at least, until I grew to be a middle-aged woman. But I think it was all wrong. Or I mean, when you came, you and John, I think I ought to have come right home, because two women can do what one alone can not. And you are a married woman, Annie, and that protects me."

A wan, incredulous smile flickered for a moment in the elder woman's face, which yet was almost a child's face. It had never occurred to her that she could protect anybody. Yet, along with the almost derisive smile, there came a sudden resolve to stand by this young thing, and help her in her hopeless undertaking; all at least that she, a weak, discouraged woman, could.

But her words were not encouraging:

"They'll pawn your clothes, Kate; your trunk is not safe here for a night. I wish they had not sent it to you. You might have kept your things there and gone after something once in awhile. He'll take that bedspread the first thing, and that cur-

tain, it will hang in Jim Moxen's bar-room before to-morrow night. Oh! I know all about it; you may try and *try*, and that is all the good it will do. He sold our little baby's shoes, Kate, the only shoes she ever wore; with the print of her feet in them; while she lay in the coffin, he sold them — for rum! And, Kate, I watched the coffin all day and all night. I never stepped from its side for a moment. I was afraid he would try to sell it for rum!"

Her eyes were dry and burning, and her voice was steady as the voice of one who has thought over a bitter record until it has lost its power to outwardly move the victim any more, but is nevertheless burning at her heart.

Kate stroked the faded, yellow hair tenderly.

"Poor Annie," she said, her voice low and pitiful; and she took this desolate, sinned against woman from that moment into her stronger heart, and resolved to live at least for her. But the words she spoke, after a moment, were very strong

and brave: "Annie, we will save him yet."

And then there was a step outside, which they knew, and both women rose up and waited, their faces pale, their nerves quivering.

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CHAPTER XIII.

SILKEN COILS.

IT was John Hartzell, and a curious thing had happened to him. He was sober. He looked from one to the other of them, then glanced quickly about the room. How much of its changes he took in they did not know, but he only said:

"Got anything to eat?"

"Yes," said Kate, for she knew that her sister could not speak. "We have something nice to eat; and we were afraid it would spoil before you came."

Her voice was pleasant to hear, and she made haste to set before him a potato stew, whose appetizing odor filled the room. Ten cents from that wonderful dollar of Holly's had bought a soup bone, which had been skilfully simmering for half the afternoon,

with sliced potatoes, and certain other ingredients, which for a few cents had been gathered. The food was speedily dished, and they sat down together, those three, to their evening meal. The atmosphere was so new as to be intensely embarrassing. John Hartzell had not been as sober in weeks as he was to-night; and he had not sat down to a really decent meal, at a decently clean table before, in his own house, in years! Yet you will remember that he had been used in his boyhood, to the best. And the sister who sat near him now had sat opposite him then—a sweet, childish face which he distinctly remembered. And the woman who sat opposite him now, had, on the rare occasions when she made one of their family group, in her delicate laces and ribbons, set all his pulses to quivering with hints of a rose-colored future, when to sit opposite each other at a family table would be their right. Here they sat to-night, and between them and that sunny past stretched an almost infinite gulf!

Now, as to the influences which had

been brought to bear upon him to send him home in a comparatively sober state. Had those two known the story, one of them, at least, would have received an added proof to her belief that God reigns. When John Hartzell stumbled away from his home in the early morning, the uppermost desire of his heart had been brandy. But John Hartzell's credit was gone. He must, then, in some way, earn a little money before he could hope to quench his thirst. He had been too much under the influence of liquor the night before to know that his sister had come home to remain, and was not therefore aware that there was any clothing in the house which might be sold. There was no help for it but to find some work.

But what could the college-bred man, who had no trade, and had fallen before he had a profession, find to do? Saw wood? Oh, yes; and split it, and pile it, and carry water. These and like lucrative employments were all the avenues open to such as he. He had for a few days been

employed in one of the cellar rumholes, to measure out liquid death to other victims; but the temptation to drink it made him an unprofitable clerk, and there came a day when he was unceremoniously kicked out. Now when one falls so low that he has not mental or moral worth enough to sell rum, what can he do?

John Hartzell stumbled on through the town, hunting his morning drink, and came at last past the neat home where the Cope-lands lived. At the gate, waiting for a slow-moving schoolboy to join him, stood Holly. He knew John Hartzell instantly. Trust a fourteen-year-old boy for knowing by sight all the people in the town. The minister may not know them, nor the busy citizens with their eyes fixed on business, but the schoolboys will. This wreck of a man was Kate Hartzell's brother—the one she had gone to save. He was pledged to help. How should he do it? How hungry the man looked! Holly had just risen from a good breakfast; his instincts were true; what was the way to help a hungry man?

"Halloo!" he said, "have you had your breakfast?"

"No, I haven't," the reply was growled out; but John Hartzell paused wonderingly. The question was strange to him. Holly thought rapidly; his mother did not approve of tramps; she did not at this time approve of anybody by the name of Hartzell; but it was not ten minutes ago that she had said in a discontented tone to the busy doctor:

"I do wish that we could get that rubbish cleared away from the back shed to-day. Why, no; Holly can't do it very well. He has no clothes suitable for such a job as that."

And the doctor had replied, taking hurried swallows of hot coffee between the sentences:

"Watch for some fellow to come along, my dear, and set him at work. I wish I had time to attend to it; but I must be off for a ten-miles ride; that Davis boy is down again, worse than ever, I hear."

Now, John Hartzell's clothes were not in

a condition to be injured by the rubbish in the back shed.

"See here," Holly said, "if you will come in and cart that pile of all sorts of things down to the heap below here, that they are getting ready to burn, my mother will give you a good breakfast—hot buckwheat cakes, and coffee, you know. Will you do it?"

The words had an appetizing sound, although John Hartzell muttered that he'd rather have the money. But he was hungry as well as thirsty; so he shambled in without more ado, and did the work; and Holly ran with breathless haste to tell his mother that he had engaged a man, and promised him buckwheat cakes and coffee. It was true she told him he was a foolish boy; that bread and butter and a bone to pick were good enough for such workmen; but she baked the cakes, and sugared the coffee. And Holly hovered near, and made one single remark to the man as he was eagerly swallowing his third cup of steaming coffee:

"Wasn't it nice when you had such breakfasts as this every morning?"

A thrust made squarely at John Hartzell's past! What did Holly Copeland know about it? Why, Fannie had told bits of the picnic talk, and he had questioned and cross-questioned until he learned the fact that the Hartzells were not once what they were now; and his mother had said that accounted for Kate's refined ways; it was strange that people would allow themselves to become beasts through love of drink. Not another word said Holly; and he dashed off at last to school, feeling sorrowful that he could not have thought of some way to help Kate; but the word that he dropped rankled in John Hartzell's mind all the morning. There had been nothing in years to recall to him his past.

He went out from the warm room, rested and refreshed by the hot coffee and the buckwheat cakes. The burning thirst which had tormented him all the morning was a trifle less intense. Still with money

in his pocket he would have known just how to spend it. How should he earn some?

Humanly speaking, it was strange that Miss Wainwright should be the next to accost him. He had reached the main business street by this time; and she was making haste down the busy side of it, a basket on her arm. She gave searching looks at the man shambling along with irresolution, and a vague feeling of regret written on every lineament of his face. Then she addressed him in quick, business-like tones:

"Are you looking for work?"

"Ye-yes'm," said John Hartzell, hesitating at first; he had forgotten that such was his errand.

"Then I am looking for you," she said promptly, "my man is suddenly called away, and there are apples to gather, and several other things before any harder frost comes. If you will take this basket and come right along with me, I will set you to work in less than no time."

"What do you pay?" John asked, taking the offered basket, and feeling himself moved in her direction by the very force of her energy.

"Good wages if the workman suits me. Better wages than you have been getting lately."

The marks of sin were so apparent on him that she could not resist this thrust. Miss Wainwright knew he was a drunkard; and while she was an earnest and uncompromising temperance woman, she had hitherto shunned drunkards as she would the plague. She had been heard to declare that no man who made a brandy flask of himself should work for her; but in the light of some new ideas, which the day of the memorable picnic had given her, she had determined to hire the first drunkard she met, and try to set him at work at something. What if that should be the first step toward reaching him? As they tramped along toward her handsome home, Miss Wainwright asked several pointed questions, not in the line of rebuke, unless

the man's conscience was very wide awake. Miss Wainwright was wise in many things; she was very well aware that she must kidnap her man, before even wholesome reproof would be of any avail. But among others came the question:

"What shall I call you?"

"My name is Hartzell," he said, "John Hartzell."

And then for almost a block Miss Wainwright did not speak. The name startled her so. This, then, was the "Brother John" who had been the college acquaintance of Mr. Durant, the temperance lecturer, and who was the brother of that neat little Kate, whom she had resolved to befriend, if for no other reason than to show Josie Fleming what a goose she was. What a strange thing that the first intemperate man she ever attempted to help should be this one, in whom she had felt an unaccountable interest ever since she heard his name, and for whom she had prayed, by name, ever since! What was she to do for him to-day? Had God a

special message to him from her? She must guard her words carefully, lest other than those which he meant her to speak should drop out unawares and do harm.

They were at the great gate now, and she pointed out his work with few words, then went in to watch and think.

It was long since John Hartzell had passed such a morning. Not that he had not many a time made spasmodic efforts to find employment, but his rags and his breath and his entire forlorn appearance had been always against him. Miss Wainwright herself may have passed him a dozen times with nothing but a shudder of disgust.

He worked steadily for an hour or more, then the terrible faintness began to overwhelm him. Could he slip away, he wondered, unobserved? But then, he had no money, and where would he get anything to drink? The last time he had offered to clean the alley for old Jock for a glass of brandy, that worthy had kicked him out of the back door for an answer. What was the use? Yet what should he do?

"Miss Wainwright says drink this; she says gathering apples is powerful thirsty work."

It was Keziah's voice right at his elbow, and it was coffee she held up to him. A great steaming bowl full, black with strength. Miss Wainwright, watching him from her window, saw the feverish haste with which he drained the bowl. She had been just in time. Do you wonder that she chanced to be in time? I'll tell you part of the secret: A dozen times during that hour, while she went about her room dusting, arranging, planning, she had said:

"O Lord, show me how to get hold of him! Let me help save him."

All the forenoon the fight went on. Twice Miss Wainwright herself appeared and gathered her big white apron full of apples while she talked. Careful talk. How long had he lived in the place? Where did he come from? Oh, indeed! Utica was a very pretty place; she used to visit there years ago. Did he ever take a ride on Genesee Street? Yes, he had. He spoke

the words with a short, sharp sound; and Miss Wainwright, listening, thanked God and took courage. She did not know, it is true, what memories she was stirring by her random questions, if questions can be random, after one has coined them in prayer. She did not know that he had dashed through Genesee Street behind his own gay pony, with Annie by his side; the pretty girl in rose-colored ribbons, who chose him in preference to a dozen others who would have been glad to take her to ride. That was before his father failed. But Annie had not cared about the failure. She had laid her two soft, small hands on his arm, and looked up into his eyes with her own bright ones, and told him that she did not mind being poor with him to take care of her. That was once when they were walking on Genesee Street, away out in the upper part of the city where it is quiet. Miss Wainwright knew nothing of this; but God did. What was the matter with everybody this day, that they continually brought before John Hartzell the face of his past, in

which he had supposed himself to be a man?

By and by he was called in to the shining kitchen. Dinner was ready. John Hartzell had not been seated at such a table for a long time. Miss Wainwright was experimenting. Her faithful Keziah, who always unquestioningly did her bidding, had, for all that, her own thoughts; and she thought her mistress was losing her mind!

"Set out the little table, Keziah, in the middle of the room, and put up the leaves, and put on one of the small, square tablecloths. Bring a china soup plate, and one of the large silver spoons. No, no; not those knives, Keziah, bring silver ones, and one of the large napkins. Keziah, I want you to set the table exactly as you would if Doctor Brandon were going to be here to dinner."

And Keziah obeyed, though much inclined to sniff. It was at this table that John Hartzell presently sat down. Quite alone. Keziah had orders to serve the soup, and then to vanish, until he was ready for his

next course. What soup it was! Rich with the juices of meats and appetizing vegetables. And the spoon was solid silver. Yes, Miss Wainwright was right. John Hartzell, the gay young student, had sat often at a table as fine in all its appointments as this. The very odor of rose leaves about the damask napkin brought a memory of his mother not only but of the time when Annie used to come to their house to tea; but this again Miss Wainwright did not know.

It would take too long to tell you the story of all devices of that day. Miss Wainwright was not for a moment unfaithful to what she was beginning to believe was in some way her trust. There were callers during the afternoon, but the mistress took a seat at the end window, which commanded a view of the orchard, and once excused herself abruptly while she went to speak to her man. She had seen him throw down the empty basket and seize his ragged coat in a desperate air.

The callers smiled and said to each other

that she always had an eye to business whatever was going on. Yes, she had; did not her Master say: "I must be about my Father's business?"

Over the question of how John Hartzell was to be paid, Miss Wainwright thought and prayed much. Money would certainly be dangerous; and would not meat and vegetables be equally so? She had not been studying the question of reform all these years not to know that potatoes and poultry and butter were easily exchanged for rum. How should the food that she meant to serve John Hartzell's family for days be gotten safely through the snares of Satan in the shape of saloon and restaurant which lined his homeward way?

At last there came to her a bright thought. She went out at once to the orchard to see if her mode of reasoning could be brought to bear on John Hartzell.

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CHAPTER XIV.

"LABORERS TOGETHER."

DID you go to housekeeping as soon as you were married, John?"

Yes, he had. John remembered the little house on Whitesboro Street. It had been a wonderful descent from the large and handsome one on Genesee Street. But it was cosily furnished and Annie was its mistress, and he had been proud of it; and had meant to reform all his wild ways and to make her happy in it. None of this did he say to Miss Wainwright; he merely answered her briefly, even gruffly.

"Yes," she said, "I know the street well. And I dare say you traded at Parker's, and were as proud as anything when the delivery wagon brought home your first stock of groceries and vegetables."

Yes, John remembered that. Was there nothing connected with his past that was not to be photographed for him that day?

"Well, now, John, I wonder if you wouldn't like to play up old times? You have worked faithfully to-day, and I was thinking of paying you in vegetables and poultry and milk and eggs and butter. I have hosts of those things, you know, and I like to exchange them for labor; but it would be too much for you to think of carrying. I see my man who takes care of the horses has just got around, and, if you like, I will have him harness and deliver the goods at your door, just as it used to be done, and that will give your wife a happy surprise. Come, now, John Hartzell, am I mistaken in you, do you suppose? Don't you want to be a man again? You have been nothing but a street loafer for so long, that I thought maybe you had forgotten you were ever anything else; but I have seen several times to-day that you haven't. Make a big effort now, and come back to manhood."

John Hartzell returned Miss Wainwright's steady gaze and spoke gravely:

"You think, maybe, that I haven't tried. I can tell you that I have made fifty thousand promises, and broken them all. I can not let the stuff alone which has been my ruin. The taste for it was born with me."

"Exactly so," said Miss Wainwright, promptly, "and the love of sin, in some form, was born with me; what you and I have to do is to assert our rights and say that we will not be slaves to sin. Come, I don't want to argue with you; you don't need it. You are smart enough to think of a hundred things that I might say. What I want you to do now is to start again. Make that wife of yours happy tonight. I don't suppose you have really done anything to make her happy in a long time; and yet I dare say you meant to be all the world to her when you promised you would."

She did not say much more. It did not seem to her wise to talk. She wished with all her heart that there was some way to

shield John Hartzell from his enemy on his homeward way. If it would only do for her to walk down town with him, she would be more than willing. He had agreed to the being paid in farm produce, and she had seen a flash of something like what, if she had known it, was the old fire in his eyes, when he heard her direction to the man:

"Peter, you are to harness Doll to the market-wagon and deliver whatever is in it to the third house from the corner on Varley Street; Hartzell, is the name. You are to tell whoever comes to the door that Mr. John Hartzell ordered them brought there. Do you understand?"

Why, yes, Peter understood; but his eyes were as wide open as Keziah's, and he took off his hat and ran all his fingers through his hair in astonishment. And here Miss Wainwright felt that her power must end. She could see no way to safely shield the poor tempted man during his homeward walk. Whether he would reach home a sober man or a beast, she had no means

of knowing. She could think of no excuse for being his companion that would not be too apparent to cover her design. She must ask the Lord to go with him and be his shield. And yet none knew better than she that John Hartzell could limit the power even of the Lord, if he chose not to be shielded.

To show you the ways which the Master has of supplementing the work of his servants, I must let you hear a bit of conversation which was being held in the post-office that same afternoon. One of the distributing clerks, who was leisurely finding their proper niches for the last package of letters, paused wonderingly over one address, then burst into laughter:

"Look here, McLean," he shouted to that young man, who was making out a money order, "here is a letter addressed to John Hartzell, Esq. Do you know any such individual? That old fellow who reels around the streets and does nothing but drink, is the only John Hartzell in town or in the county, so far as I know. Do

you suppose he would recognize himself if he should see his name written in this fashion?"

Young McLean hurriedly made the last flourish to the paper, delivered it to the waiting messenger, then came out from his corner to see the curiosity.

"John Hartzell, Esq." No mistaking the name, for the writing was plain, as well as elegant. A man's hand, but the hand of one accustomed to much writing. No sharp corners to the curves, and the flourish which wound all about the capital H was deemed worthy of study by the clerk who prided himself on his fine writing.

"Poor wretch!" the younger man said, as he turned to place it in the H niche, "I am afraid that will lie among the 'uncalled for's' until the mice claim it as their special property. The fellow never comes to the office. I don't suppose he ever received a letter in his life."

Hadn't he! Delicate, cream-laid paper, envelopes in the latest style and tint, perfumed with the choicest lavender!

If these young men had but known somewhat of that other man's past, it might have made them more pitiful. It is never safe to judge of any man, by his condition after alcohol has made him its slave. But Lloyd McLean was thinking. That pretty Kate Hartzell and the talk which was had after she came up the cliff; there was something about a brother, and his name was John. He was silent, recalling bit by bit the words of Kate and of Mr. Durant, and then of Josie Fleming and his own disgust over her rudeness. He held out his hand for the letter and asked a question:

"Who is this John Hartzell? Where did he come from? I never heard of him until the other day."

"Why, he is old Joe's son. You have seen old Joe stagger by? Well, John is a chip of the old block, only more so. He will be a worse drunkard than his father if he lives long enough. They came from somewhere in New York; followed the father, you know, though what there is about him to follow, would be difficult to tell. John

has only been here two or three months, and his sole occupation is to drink, so far as I can learn. I wish New York could be made to support its own paupers after it has made them."

"Let me have the letter," said Lloyd. "I will try and get it to the man."

"Pooh!" said the other, "what's the use?"

Nevertheless, he relinquished the letter, of course, for Lloyd was his superior in office. So it happened that, two hours later, Lloyd McLean stood on the steps of McAllister's store, waiting for Eben Bruce, when he heard one man say to another:

"What's going to happen? There goes old Hartzell's son, sober. I have hardly seen that since he has been here."

"He won't get past Minnow's sober," said the other. "The old fellow is out on the steps now, watching for bait. A drunkard who is sober has generally been at work somewhere, and may have a stray dime in his pocket; and Minnow is as sharp as the next one, when he scents money."

Then both gentlemen laughed.

Lloyd turned eagerly in the direction in which they were looking, and saw a shabbily-dressed man, with a hard-looking hat; but it was set squarely on his head, and his step was steady.

Lloyd had no knowledge of the conflict going on in the man's mind. He, too, knew that he was to pass Minnow's. He had not been strong-willed enough to go the other way, and so avoid it. I do not know that it would have made much difference if he had. It would have been a difficult matter in Eastwood to have avoided saloons, though some of them were not quite so low as Minnow's.

There were no dimes in John's pocket; Miss Wainwright's prudence had managed that; and there was in John's mind a weak and feeble inclination toward going home sober, and seeing what his wife would say to the messenger from Miss Wainwright's farm. The resolve had been strong when he left the farm, with the earnest woman's earnest words ringing in his ears. But it grew feebler with every step; he had not been trained

to self-control. It is true there were no dimes, but there were apples, great, red-cheeked beauties, such as grew nowhere save on Miss Wainwright's farm. Minnow, the rum-seller, was a very loving father; he would have no objection to dealing out a glass of poison to a man in return for two choice apples apiece for each of his four children. John Hartzell did not believe he could pass Minnow's saloon.

"Hartzell!" called a clear, ringing voice, and John paused, and looked around inquiringly. "I have something for you; wait a minute."

And Lloyd McLean exchanged a few words with the clerk, who now appeared from inside the store, then dashed across the road.

"Your name is John Hartzell, I believe. I am in the post-office, and there was a letter for you in this afternoon's mail, so I pocketed it to hand to you when I got a chance."

"A letter for me!"

John Hartzell spoke slowly, as one bewil-

dered, and held out his hand mechanically to receive the white messenger.

"John Hartzell, Esq."

The plain, elegant writing, or the name, or the association, or something, sent a flush over his face, and unconsciously, he straightened himself, and threw back his shoulders.

Lloyd smiled. He liked the effect of his thoughtfulness.

"Minnow sha'n't get hold of the fellow to-night," he said, and he turned and walked behind him. Not close enough to appear to be following, yet close enough to hear Minnow presently say:

"Hello, John! been at work to-day? Come in and have something."

But John Hartzell had already broken the seal of the strange letter, and was deep in the midst of the first page, and neither saw nor heard Minnow. And the letter! Why, the inside was more bewildering than the outside. It commenced:

MY DEAR HARTZELL:

Old chum, how are you? If I had only known, those two days which I spent in Eastwood, that you

were in the same town, how quickly I would have sought you out. Why, man, what were you about! You must surely have recognized the name of Scott Durant, and remembered your old friend? I only heard of you the night I was obliged to leave, and then, my boy, I heard no good of you. John, you are travelling a road I have been over, and I came near to the bitter end. You are not as far gone as I was, and I am saved; therefore, there is a chance for you; and my object in writing you to-night is to beg you not to wait until you reach the point that I did, because I am only one out of ten thousand who ever turns back from that.

The letter was long—page after page was hurriedly run through by the man, who still slowly made his way through the town, passing saloon after saloon in safety, though more than one proprietor judged from his appearance that John had some money, and invited him in. One of them laid a hand familiarly on his shoulder, but he shook it off with an irritable—"Let me alone!"

He had just reached the spot in the letter where Durant, his old friend, was telling about how he reached one night the point where he had resolved to rid the world of his own worthless life. John Hart-

zell had almost reached that point himself two or three times. It made the perspiration start on his forehead to read from the paper a description of the sensations which had filled his own brain and heart.

So now you understand, much better than the two who ate supper with him, how it was that John Hartzell succeeded in reaching home that night without having drunk a drop of liquor. Suppose they had known all the steps of that day—from the meeting with the boy Holly, in the morning, to the meeting with the young man at evening, with the letter that was to shield his homeward walk—how they would have exclaimed in awe over it all! How sure they would have been that all these apparent trivialities, meeting and shaping a destiny, could not have *happened*, but must have been arranged by a Master hand! Suppose we knew all the histories of all the happenings of one day? With what awe, and dismay, and terror, and gratitude, they might fill us, according as we had, with our little thoughtless words and ways, helped or

hindered the march of a soul! I wonder when the Lord's own people will awaken to the fact that there are no trivial things in life?—that there are no passing moments but what decide the eternal destinies of souls?

It was while they sat at the table, and John ate mechanically what was set before him, that Miss Wainwright's Peter knocked. As you may well understand, John Hartzell had not come home hungry. His first question, "Got anything to eat?" referred to others than himself. For the first time, in at least months, he thought of the needs of others, and wished that his wife could have such a supper as he had eaten. He thought, too, of the silver knife and fork, and the great, fine napkin! Annie had been used to such things.

It was Kate who opened the door to Peter's knock, and Peter, always respectful, took his hat quite off his head to the neat young woman, so entirely unlike anything that he had seen on the Flats before.

"Is this Mr. Hartzell's place, ma'am?

Then these things are to be left here," he said. "Where will you have them carried?"

And Peter turned to the well-stocked wagon and shouldered a sack of flour.

"No, ma'am, there is no mistake. Mr. John Hartzell ordered them here, ma'am. They are to pay for his day's work."

Peter's voice came in, distinctly, to those two who sat opposite each other at the table. Annie Hartzell dropped her knife and looked up into her husband's face, trembling, flushing, like the girl of seventeen whom he remembered.

"O John," she said, "did you?—have you?"

And then she stopped, and laid her head on the table, and burst into tears.

Her husband rose up from his chair and came over to her.

"Annie," he said, and the perspiration stood in drops on his face.

Kate closed the kitchen door, herself outside.

"Pile them here," she said to Peter, "outside, on the ground, anywhere. I will take them in afterward."

And Peter, wondering, disapproving, silently obeyed.

A bag of potatoes, a sack of flour, a little jar of butter, two chickens, a pail of eggs, a pail of milk, a bag of apples. What a day's work it must have been!

Kate saw, and did not see, her heart beating wildly, not over the treasures which had come to the hungry home, but over the possible scene behind that shut door. One verse sang in her heart—"What hath God wrought!" Had she known, she might have rejoiced her heart with another—"We are laborers together with God." He had many laborers, and he had made use of more than one of them that day.

As for Lloyd McLean, he went home with quick, springing step, his pulses beating. He had made his first conscious effort toward succoring a tempted soul, and the exercise thrilled him.

"Hang the stuff!" he said. "I wish there were none of it in the world. John Hartzell would certainly be better off, and so, I dare say, would Lloyd McLean—though I

don't feel in any particular danger of reaching his level. What if I should sign a total abstinence pledge, and get up a temperance *furor* here, and get John, and his father, and a lot of those fellows, in? Hurrah! What an excitement! I don't know but it is worth the effort."

CHAPTER XV.

ENGAGEMENTS.

A SUBJECT of very deep interest was up for discussion at the Copelands. They were lingering over the breakfast-table; at least the ladies of the family were; the doctor had hurried away, his breakfast half eaten, as usual, and Holly had excused himself, and departed to school. Fannie Copeland, her face all in a flush of pleasure, poured syrup on her buckwheat, eyes and thoughts unconscious of the act, her tongue meanwhile moving rapidly.

"Of course, everybody will be there who is worth meeting. The Flemings always give delightful entertainments. They say Josie is a perfect lady at home; though she hardly ever goes out without offending somebody. Mamma, I ought to have a new dress for

such an occasion. I have worn my blue silk everywhere for the last two winters."

Mrs. Copeland could on occasion be a very determined woman; there was no hesitation in her answer at this time.

"That is quite out of the question, Fannie; I wonder that you don't know it without asking. The blue silk is very pretty yet; you have not worn it so very frequently, and you have never been to the Flemings' in it. Child, look at your plate, you are flooding it with syrup!"

Fannie laughed good-naturedly; the blue silk was really not a very sore subject with her.

"That is true," she said. "I have never worn anything at the Flemings. It is the first time they have honored me with an invitation. I must be indebted to you for it, Mildred. Josie Fleming likes to get all the stars about her. Mamma, I must have some new slippers, anyway, and gloves; they will dance all the evening, I presume. Charlie Lambert says Josie doesn't know how to entertain people in any other way. I never

saw a more absurd boy than Charlie; he is always making sharp speeches about people who dance, and yet he dances, every chance he can get. He will be after you the first thing, Mildred; see if he isn't. He is always eager to have a new name on his list."

"What a strange evening to select for a party," said Mrs. Copeland. "I should think the Flemings would have more respect for their New England origin than to have a large company on Saturday evening."

"Oh! I know why that is; Gus Fleming is here. He has just run up to spend Sunday, and must be off again on Monday. Besides, mamma, they don't call this a party; it is 'just a few friends,' the note says; though that means anywhere inside of a hundred. Josie Fleming is never particular about the truth."

Mrs. Copeland laughed.

"You don't speak in very high terms of your friends, I must say, Fannie; Mildred will be wondering what remarks you make about her when she is absent."

"No, she won't, mamma; Mildred knows

me better than that. Friends? I wonder when I ever pretended that Josie Fleming was a friend of mine? There isn't a person in Eastwood whom I like so little; but for all that, she gives elegant entertainments, and one meets all the nice people there, and I am very much obliged to Mildred for visiting me and getting me an invitation. What shall you wear, Milly?"

And now Mildred, who had several times opened her lips to speak, and closed them again, made herself heard.

"I think I must get you to carry my regrets, if you will excuse me from going."

But this produced an outburst of dismayed inquiry. Why was she not going? Was she sick? Offended? Had anything happened? Of course, Fannie would not go without her. Fannie's pleasure in the invitation had largely been that now her friend would be entertained in the style to which she was accustomed. Mildred could not repress a smile. Evening parties were no novelty to her; they had bored her too often. She was not accustomed to seeing them made matters of

such importance. However, she must make some explanation. Nothing had happened; she was quite well and entirely happy, and had a nice scheme for the evening. Miss Wainwright had given her a special invitation to her house that evening; she had met her on the street, when she went out to walk with Holly.

Miss Wainwright! How very strange! Was she going to have company; and on Saturday evening, too?

"Oh, no, there was no company; at least not what the Copelands meant;" and Mildred felt her face glowing.

There was a subject on which she had not learned to speak frankly. It embarrassed her to say that she had received and accepted a special invitation to the temperance prayer meeting.

"To prayer meeting?" repeated Fannie. "What an idea! I mean, how queer to think of your promising to go. A prayer meeting in a house seems real queer, anyway. Well, it does, mamma; of course, it is all right, but then — why, Mildred Powers, you don't pre-

tend to say you consider that a sufficient excuse for not going to the Flemings!"

"Why not?" Mildred questioned.

She certainly had replied that she would come. Wasn't that an engagement?

Yes; but it was only a prayer meeting. People understood, of course, that something might hinder her. But what had possessed her to say she would go, in the first place? Fannie did not understand it, and her guest felt like a hypocrite. She gave close attention to her knife and fork for a few minutes, then laid them down, and spoke earnestly:

"The truth is, Fannie, I want to go; I have changed very much in some respects during the few months since you and I were in school together. I have been intending to tell you, but some way I did not seem able. I never used to go to prayer meetings of any kind, when I could help it. You know that, but I have learned to pray and like to go where people are praying, better, I think, than anywhere else."

Now, indeed, they had quiet—absolute, embarrassed quiet. She spoke to a mother and daughter who had not learned to pray; and who did not know in the least what reply to make to this startling bit of news. Fannie ate her cake at last, in nervous haste, and Mildred felt as though another mouthful of anything would choke her.

Fannie was the first to find voice :

"Of course I will not go, Mildred, if you don't want to; it was mainly for your sake."

It was well she said this. It gave Mildred speech again. It by no means followed that because she wanted to be elsewhere, and had so planned, Fannie must be held away. She was earnest in her protest. Holly would walk with her to Miss Wainwright's; he had said that he would be glad to do so; and Fannie could feel that her friend was enjoying herself in her chosen way. But Fannie was not fully convinced. It had been a great pleasure to her to think of introducing

her elegant friend from Washington into aristocratic Eastwood society. For you must know that the Copelands, though eminently respectable, had not, up to this time, appeared often in that portion of Eastwood society which called itself aristocratic.

Fannie was young, and Fannie's father was by no means wealthy; two reasons, perhaps, why fashionable life had not laid large claims upon her as yet. But Fannie was as eager a young fledgeling as ever beat her wings against a home nest; and had learned many things during her year at a fashionable school which she longed to have opportunity to practice. Three months ago when she had known Mildred Powers well, they had been much in sympathy on these points, or at least Fannie had supposed so. She could not yield without further argument. Why could not Mildred send regrets to Miss Wainwright, if it really was an engagement? Miss Wainwright would not certainly be so unreasonable as to expect her to give the

preference to a prayer meeting? One could attend a prayer meeting at any time; while an entertainment at the Flemings was certainly not an ordinary event.

"And you are so fond of dancing, Mildred. I was afraid you would not have a chance to have a dance to real elegant music while you were here; but the Flemings always have the very choicest. That Mr. Cleveland will be there, of course; and I know he dances well, from his walk. I wanted to see you two dance together, Mildred."

Fannie's tone was mournfully reproachful; but Mildred, busy with her embarrassing thoughts, did not notice it. Why need she have been such a coward? All these things would have been so much easier in their quiet confidences together. Why had she been so silent all these days? There must be other revelations now.

"I have given up dancing, Fannie."

"Given up dancing!" I suppose it would almost have amused you to hear the consternation in Fannie's voice. Mildred

Powers, the most graceful dancer in the school, the one most sought after by young gentlemen skilled in that branch of learning! Fannie could not understand it."

"What does all this mean?" she asked almost in indignation. "Why have you pray?"

"That question involves a long answer, at least it will if you keep on saying why? And we have detained Mrs. Copeland long enough, perhaps; I can only tell you in brief this: I gave it up because I could not see any way of honoring Christ in it, and I saw ways in which it might bring reproach on his cause; so of course I had to give it up. If you care to hear the long story, Fannie, I will tell it to you some time."

And then they followed her movement and arose from the table; but Fannie said:

"I am sure I don't understand anything about it."

And Mildred knew she did not and could not, for it was spoken in a language that Fannie had not learned. Why had she not

told her before? This was the refrain which her conscience repeated all that morning. She saw herself hiding her Bible under the red shawl on the old lounge, and felt her cheeks glow for her cowardice. If she had kept on reading, and Fannie had looked curious and questioned, as Fannie certainly would have done, and they had held a long, earnest talk together, as she had meant to do every hour since she came, what might not have been accomplished?

But Fannie was induced to go to the party that evening. In fact, she did not need much coaxing; her heart was set on reaching into circles from which her youth, at least, had hitherto excluded her. The blue silk was freshened with new trimmings and buttons, and a delicate lace fichu was bought to cover a doubtful spot in the waist. Over the price of the fichu the doctor looked grave, it is true, and told his wife that it would have covered the nakedness of a family who had called to him as he was passing the Flats; but the wife had replied that he must certainly see that his own daughter needed covering as well as

the people on the Flats. So he went away, and gave to the poor creatures on the Flats all the skill that he as a physician could command, and relieved their most immediate wants beside; telling himself that he could get along without a rubber coat well enough; he had done it for ten winters, he might as well do it eleven. And Fannie went to the Flemings' and looked like a pretty girl, as she was.

Had she heard the conversation at the Flemings the morning their invitations were issued, I do not feel sure that she would have gone.

"I suppose I shall have to invite Fannie Copeland, mother. She has a lady visiting her who they say is a relative of the Powers of Washington. If I go to Washington this winter, I shall want to get in with that set. It is queer to have to get my chance of it through the Copelands. Fannie hasn't a decent thing to wear. I don't know how she can come, for my part. I wonder if they will expect me to ask the Hartzell girl?"

Then Fred Fleming had a word to say:

"Look here, Joe. I have a friend I want you to invite. You met him at the sociable or somewhere. Bruce his name is; he is a good fellow. He clerks at McAllister's. Oh, he isn't a swell; but then he knows how to behave in good society. You girls will take to him, for he is handsome. Doesn't go into society; a book-worm; spends his nights in studying. Girls take to that sort, especially if they have fine eyes and hair. You send him an invitation. I like the fellow."

And Josie, who knew she must humor her brother's whims, if she wanted his assistance during the next busy day, sent the invitation, not without a demur that Eastwood society was sadly mixed, and that she presumed Eben Bruce hadn't a dress suit.

However, he had, for he bought it for this occasion. Went in debt for it. He told himself that he needed a new suit, that his other was really getting shabby, and that while he was about it he might as well get a good one. He had been drinking a glass of wine just before this, or he would not have done any such thing.

Fannie Copeland was right in her interpretation of "a few friends." There were many invitations. Among them two Christian men were bidden. Mr. Cleveland glanced at his note, said aloud with surprise in his tone: "Saturday evening!" Then smiled as he remembered, drew toward him his writing-case and wrote a few words about "previous engagement," for that evening, dispatched a messenger with it and put the invitation in his waste basket and the matter from his thoughts. Charlie Lambert read his and said:

"Saturday evening! Good for Josie! Here is a chance out from that queer engagement that aunt Hannah forced upon me. Odd night for company, though. Pretty hard not to infringe on Sunday a little."

Then he hunted for the proper materials and wrote:

MY DEAR MISS WAINWRIGHT:

I regret to say that circumstances beyond my control will prevent me from being present at your house this evening, so you must not depend on me for the singing. Don't cross me off your books, though, and some other time I will do my best to serve you,

Still another read his invitation as he walked from the post-office. The distributing clerk had handed it to him as he was passing out. It gave him a degree of satisfaction, for Lloyd McLean was as fond of having a good time as he could very well be. This was short notice for a formal party, it was, therefore, probably not a formal party; but just what it promised — "a few friends," and the extreme of fashionable toilet could be dispensed with. He had certainly had very few opportunities to enjoy himself since he came to Eastwood. He believed he would go. Just then Mr. Cleveland crossed the street and came to his side, linked his arm in his in an eager, friendly way and commenced talking without ceremony:

"I claim you as a colleague. I saw you helping poor John Hartzell past some dangerous place last night. I was trying to overtake him, but should have been too late. You will be glad to know that he reached home safely. Miss Wainwright tells me that she thinks he struggled with his appetite all day yesterday and came off victor. We

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must save that man. I wonder if it wouldn't be possible to get him around to Miss Wainwright's to-night? Or would that be working too rapidly? By the way, won't you take hold of the singing to-night? We want to make the first meeting a success, you know?"

Lloyd McLean laughed. He was a merry-hearted fellow. That looked almost like a joke. He was being made to appear in a new role. A prayer meeting, and he leading the singing! And in league with such a man as Cleveland! That was a curious jump! His fun had been comparatively harmless heretofore; but it had led him in very different company from this. Another thought—had he really helped the fellow the night before? Poor wretch! He pitied him, and he pitied that pretty girl, his sister. She would be at the prayer meeting, doubtless. He wouldn't mind seeing her again. He wouldn't mind being thanked by her if he really had been of any service. But a prayer meeting! Then there was that invitation. Could he compass them both? Hardly. They were in opposite directions, more than a mile apart, and the

hour was set for eight o'clock—and Eastwood, while it aimed to be quite fashionable in some respects, was primitive as to its hours. It would hardly be the thing to appear much after nine o'clock. And, if the Hartzell girl should be there, it wouldn't be just the thing to let her go home alone—and her way lay in still an opposite direction.

"Do you go to the Flemings?" he said aloud.

"I? Oh, no. I am engaged, you know. May we expect you?"

Here was a chance to enter two different grades of society. How would it do to make a jump and take the grade where he would be least expected? He laughed again. It certainly had the elements of a joke in it.

"I'll come," he said to Mr. Cleveland.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THINGS THAT FITTED.

FIVE minutes afterward he was astonished at himself. What a remarkable proceeding for Lloyd McLean to give up a party for a prayer meeting! Especially a party at the Flemings'. But in that "especially" lay part of his willingness to be absent. He was apt to be intense in his fancies, and intense dislike for Josie Fleming was uppermost now. There would probably be too much fashion there for real enjoyment. On the whole, he was satisfied with the condition of things. He even made a faint effort to secure a recruit for the meeting, in the person of his roommate. Not that he had the remotest idea that his friend Bruce was in peril. There is not a class of persons on the earth who

can be more obtuse than young men, on occasion. And Lloyd McLean was the only one of those who had very much to do with Eben Bruce, who did not know that he had fallen on evil days. You will remember how completely Lloyd was deceived on the day of the picnic. Since that time he had not seen much of Bruce. Evening work at the office had been heavy, and grew heavier as the old year waned. Business was crowding also at the store, apparently, for on the two evenings when he had come home comparatively early, Bruce was not in yet, and did not come until Lloyd was asleep. One night he found him in, and sleeping heavily as one utterly tired out. He rallied him the next morning on being in such haste for bed as to have gone only half ready, but received a cold and somewhat haughty answer. He had noticed that Bruce was heavy-eyed and irritable, and in many ways unlike himself. He attributed it to disappointment that his chosen plans of study were so interrupted, and to the fact that he had overworked for months.

"That fellow will go home broken down in health before the winter is over," he had remarked more than once to a mutual acquaintance, and he had refrained from practical jokes and merry ways, and been as sympathetic as he could; and, had he been asked, would have replied confidently that Bruce never drank a drop. Yet not a day had passed since the picnic that Eben Bruce had not drank more liquor than his nervous system could bear. Nor, indeed, had there been a day when he had not resolved that he would never touch the stuff again. He was certainly not going into this thing with blinded eyes. He had tumbled headlong at first, it is true, but he had made the immediate discovery that his will was not strong enough to resist the awful temptation which that first fall had opened before him. Oh, for some friend at hand to point him to the only source of safety!

I hope you are not mixed as to time. You are to understand that this first prayer meeting, for which preparation was being made, was not on the Saturday immediately

following the picnic, but a week later. It had been discovered that there were obstacles in the way of that first Saturday, and the meeting had therefore been arranged later.

Promptly at the appointed time the "few friends" gathered in Mr. Fleming's handsome parlors. His parlors were the largest and best furnished, so far at least as regarded the upholsterer's art, of any house in Eastwood.

Fannie Copeland certainly looked well in her blue silk, toned as it was by the soft, rich lace of the costly fichu. The one who discovered in her a special attraction was Eben Bruce. It so happened that these two met, for the first time, and Fred Fleming was the one who introduced them.

"She is a pretty girl," he said to his sister, "and she is just Bruce's style; you are not at all, Jo; he is intellectual; kills himself studying nights, they say."

"And is as poor as a church mouse, of course," Miss Josie replied, her lip curling; "those students always are."

Miss Josie was not in good humor. Mr. Cleveland had declined her invitation; so, also, had that handsome-eyed, young Mr. McLean, whom she thought she especially honored by admitting him into her circle.

It is true that Fannie's bright ways and words had charms for Eben Bruce. She had made good use of her year at school, and was well posted in some studies, and quick-witted in all directions. Her mother was not the only one who believed her to be superior to most of the young girls in Eastwood. She could dance, too, as well as talk. This last was not an item of importance with Eben Bruce; he had been in the habit of sneering at the people who spent all their time cultivating their heels, and had held himself aloof from the amusement. But Fannie, interested in his society, set herself to secure more of it by offering to teach him the steps.

"It is simple enough," she said, "any one with a rhythmical brain can catch the movement."

So they joined the dancers, and Eben

Bruce found, as many another has found, that there was a certain kind of intoxication in this amusement that appealed to the side of his nature which seemed just to have awakened into being.

It was found that the dancing had been somewhat premature; refreshments were being served, and together this young couple went to the refreshment room. I think I have told you before, that Eastwood, at least in the upper end of it, was an old, sleepy, aristocratic town; but the waves of modern movement had reached them sufficiently for the better class of the community to frown on the serving of intoxicants, in even their milder forms, at social gatherings. There were, therefore, many among the guests who looked gravely at the display of wine glasses, and coldly shook their heads when the wine was offered.

"It is nothing but home-made wine," Josie said, stopping before Eben Bruce as she saw him shake his head; "even your grandmother could not object to it. Mamma sees to her wines herself, and has imbibed

so many whims lately, that she will not have any in the house save those which are made here. She says she knows what they contain, and that they can harm no one. Fannie, let John fill your glass, and you and Mr. Bruce can drink a toast in honor of my birthday."

History repeating itself. If only these two had been familiar with the history. If they could have looked in on that birthday party only a few years back and then on the Hartzell household of to-day! There is many an "if" to consider. If Fannie had been taught by her mother that home-made wine was a great and poisonous serpent in disguise; if Fannie had been posted as to what one glass of it might do for a young man; if Charlie Lambert, standing by, looking on with a certain degree of anxiety, aware himself that home-made wines were not innocent—aware, too, that the young man in question was a tempted soul—had been able to shake himself away from the trammels of society sufficiently to lay his hand on Fannie Copeland's arm with the familiarity of

long acquaintance and say, "Don't take it, Fannie, it is dangerous"—it is at least possible that results other than what followed might have been. As it was, though Charlie Lambert's face flushed, and he looked anxious, he kept still; and Fannie said lightly:

"I declined wine because, to tell the truth, it is apt to give me a headache; I don't like the taste of it very well, either; but I can sip enough for a birthday remembrance if Mr. Bruce is anxious."

And Mr. Bruce, who had wanted to drain the glass and only held himself back out of respect to the lady beside him, seized it with an eagerness that some, watching, did not fail to see.

"Jo ought to be ashamed of that," said Fred Fleming, angrily. "That fellow has too much brain to play with wine, if it is home-made. It is the baldest nonsense to say there is no harm in it, for I know better."

"Why, Fred," said a young lady, sweetly, "it is the alcohol in these things that does harm; there is no alcohol in home-made wines, you know."

And she was a young lady who had taken nine studies in the high school, and as many more in a seminary of renown, and taken the French prize, and graduated in white silk and ten-buttoned gloves, and read an essay on "The Possibilities of the Future," and in this age, with all the light which has been set aglow on the subject, knew no more than that about the possibilities of a glass of home-made wine. The young man sneered. Most young men know more than this.

As for Eben Bruce, he knew only too well that there was enough in the home-made wine to set a slumbering demon wide awake in his breast. He knew while he swallowed the tiny glassful, that now he must get away from here as fast as possible; get where they did not veil the serpent in kid gloves and roses, nor present it in cut glasses that would hold a thimbleful.

Several people, Fannie Copeland among them, missed the handsome young stranger very soon after supper. What had become of him? The hostess said he regretted that he had been suddenly called away. Charlie

Lambert wished that he had kept an eye on the fellow, and tried to save him.

Fannie Copeland innocently wondered if he had received any bad news, and hoped in her heart that he would return, for the evening was less bright when he was away; and none of them knew that Fred Fleming, poor Fred Fleming, who was sure that he himself would drink too much, long before the evening was over, followed his guest to the door, and said:

"Now don't, Bruce; remember you are in danger."

The innocent, home-made wine was working, even then, in the hot young brain, and Bruce shook the warning off with an angry —

"Let me alone; you are a pretty one to preach!"

And Fred sighed, and went back to his mother's dining-room to drink more wine.

Meantime, Miss Wainwright, on Saturday morning, was seated in her handsome, old-fashioned family carriage, drawn by two shining horses. Peter, who had been installed as coachman, and was in a new suit, which

fitted his promotion, was driving with great care, and had just rounded the corner, when he received an order to halt. Charlie Lambert was passing, the inevitable cigar in his mouth.

"Does that fit?" was the first question he asked, as he obeyed the lady's summons to her side. Something in her face reminded him of the last conversation they had held together. He inclined his head toward the horses as he spoke. "It is a nice, comfortable establishment, and I presume you take great pleasure in riding around in it: I know I should; but I was wondering whether it fitted your new notions nicely."

"It hasn't," said Miss Wainwright, frankly, "but it can be made to. I have been thinking of ways in which it shall. But, Charlie, there is one thing you want to get over, and that is the notion that I have had anything to do with the getting up of that verse. Why don't you read it for yourself in the Bible? It is there, word for word. If my ways don't fit it, they ought to; there is no mistake about that. I don't be-

lieve I shall have a much trouble with the horses and carriage as you will with children. There! don't speak, I beg. You look for the world as though you were going to say: 'That is not a parallel case.' I never knew a young man to get worsted in an argument that he did not slip into the corner. Just find out what your habit is parallel with, will you, and see how you like the association? What I want to know now is whether you are coming to help us to-night? We must know what to depend upon. We want good singing, and considerable of it. I don't believe in the regulation way of managing a prayer meeting; at least I don't think this one wants to be managed by rule. Will you be on hand?"

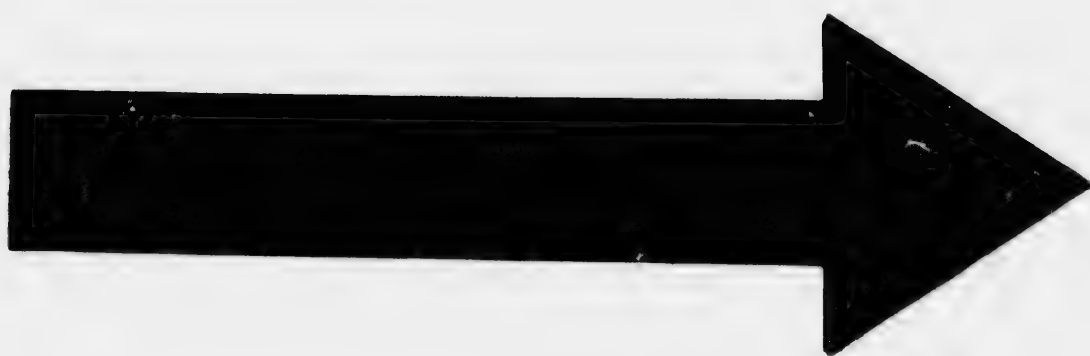
Now, Charlie Lambert's invitation had not yet reached him, and he saw no way of answering, save by a reluctant consent, leaving himself the loophole that, unless something unavoidable prevented, he would be present. I suppose he arranged with his conscience that the party at the Flemings' should be the something unavoidable.

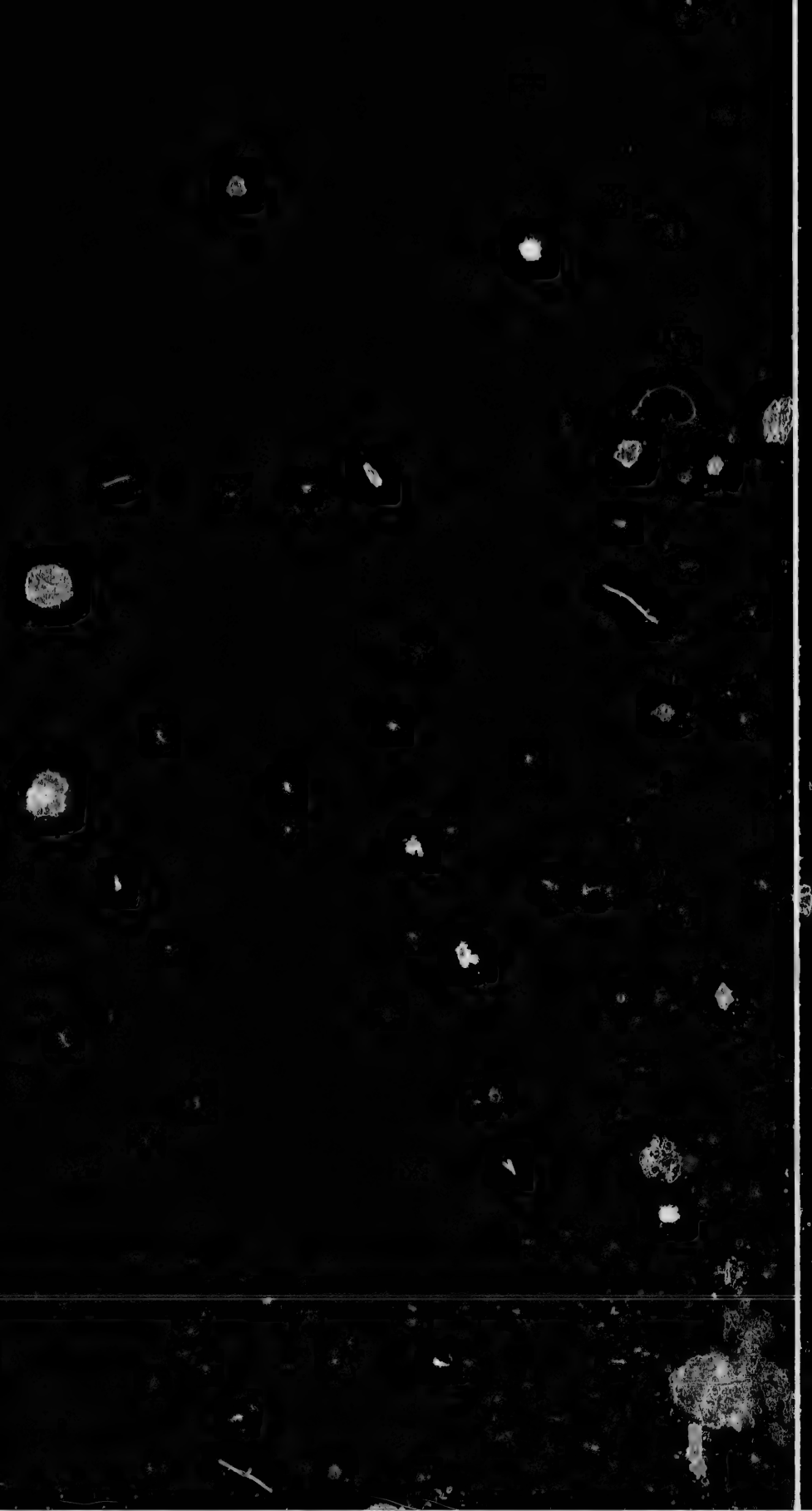
Miss Wainwright was on her way to market, and to look up Miss Hunter, whose acquaintance she was in haste to make, to see if in any way this same carriage could be made to contribute to the cause of her Master. Charlie had not suggested a new idea. Miss Wainwright's carriage had not escaped scrutiny, when she took an inventory of all her belongings, and asked them in what way they were contributing to what was supposed to be her chief aim. Could Charlie Lambert help her in any way? Did he know anything about that Miss Hunter of whom Mr. Durant spoke?

No; Charlie Lambert had not heard Mr. Durant speak of any such person. He did not know the name. He was sure his mother could not know of any new-comers of that name, or he should have heard it mentioned. Didn't Miss Wainwright know the address?

"Not exactly. It was somewhere near Smith Street."

"Smith Street!" and Charlie looked dismayed. "Why, aunt Hannah, that must be a mistake. Smith Street, you know, is that





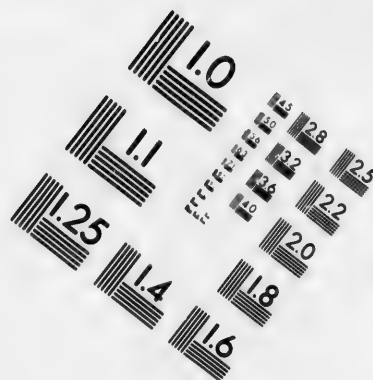
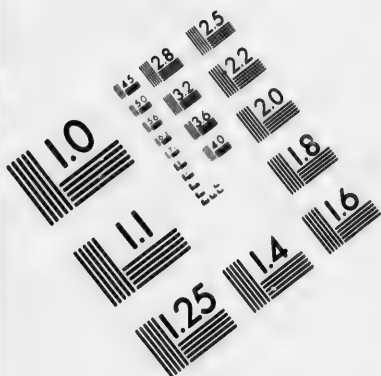
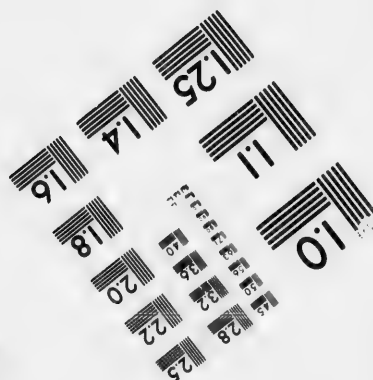
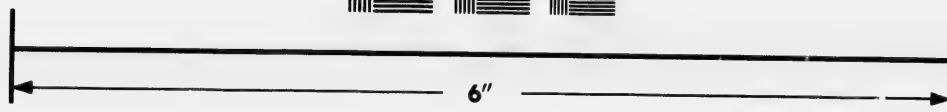
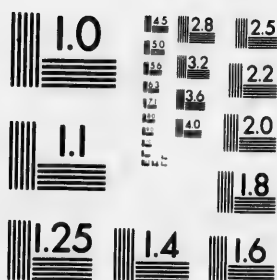


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one at the entrance, almost to the Flats. There is hardly a decent house on the street."

"Well," said Miss Wainwright, sturdily, "he didn't say she lived in a decent house; he said she was a good woman."

But she gave the order to drive on. Charlie Lambert was not the one to help her this morning; if, indeed, there was enough of him to help anybody.

"Still, if there isn't, he ought to be helped," said poor Miss Wainwright, and she sighed a little. This problem of living was getting to be very complicated.

The Flats! Just what did that name cover which was being so continually sounded in her ears during these days? She had been a resident of Eastwood for many years, but the Flats was a name and a place which seemed to have sprung up with the coming of the railroad, and the region belonged to a part of the town almost utterly unknown to Miss Wainwright; yet human beings lived there, and were huddled together in disgraceful crowds, she had heard. What was

being done to make the region respectable? What could be done? She revolved these questions, but received no answer, and had, some way, a burdened feeling that the Flats and the puzzling verse in the Bible had been exhumed together. John Hartzell lived on the Flats. Did he reach home sober? Could she do anything more for him? Could she find him, she wondered?

"Peter," she said, suddenly leaning out from the carriage, "do you know where the part of the town begins that they call the Flats? Well, then, drive there. I want to look at it."

Peter drove in silence. He knew how the place looked. Down one of the filthy, narrow alleys went the high-stepping, sleek horses and the handsome carriage. Some of the children threw mud; some of them yelled, and threw up their arms in a vain effort to frighten the horses, and all of them stared. Dirty-faced women came to the doors and stared. What a strange sight for the Flats!

Miss Wainwright, with wide-open, gray

eyes, was gazing right and left. Such a phase of life as this she had heard of, but never seen before. Suddenly she gave a low, startled exclamation, and a quick order:

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROOF OF THE DIVINE HAND.

THE carriage stopped in the narrowest part of the alley before a house, that, if anything, was more dreary than the others in the row. That this place was just now a centre of interest of some sort, was apparent. Rough-looking men and women stood about on the steps, and even out into the filthy lane. There was an air of quiet, as though something unusual had stepped in and hushed the common noises of the retreat. A shabbily dressed man was coming out of the door, and the gazers with one consent fell back and made a way for him to pass. It was this man, and the burden he carried, which had called forth Miss Wainwright's startled order; for he had under his arm a small pine box, unpainted,

unadorned in any way, yet unmistakably serving as a last resting-place for some one's dead. There followed him the most haggard-faced woman Miss Wainwright's eyes had ever seen. There were no tears on the face; she looked like one who had shed all her tears years before, and who had now nothing but settled despair with which to meet any calamity. Yet she was young, younger by years than Miss Wainwright. Two frightened children stole behind her, and this desolate group was evidently about to make its way to some spot where the coffined child could rest.

"Here," said Miss Wainwright, leaning from her carriage and speaking in the tone of quiet command which generally produces obedience, "bring it here!" and she tossed the cushions right and left, making room for the small coffin. "Help the woman in, and the children." This was her next order, and she threw open the carriage door. A man whose face she knew, stepped suddenly forward to do her bidding. She recognized him by a word of command: "John, put

the children on this seat with me, and turn that left seat."

The mother, meantime, had regarded the new-comer with a half-dazed air, and made no resistance to her orders. She was as one to whom it mattered little what came next, and whom nothing would have surprised.

"John," said Miss Wainwright, "where is the minister? There is room for him."

The listeners stared. Some of them laughed. "They ain't got no minister," said one.

John Hartzell was fastening the carriage door and made no reply.

"Didn't you have a funeral service?" said shocked Miss Wainwright, and the man who had clambered in after the coffin answered:

"We don't know no minister, and no minister don't know us. We are strangers here. Nobody's come near us; and she said she didn't care, now Mollie was dead. There couldn't nothing help *her*, and it didn't make no difference."

For the first time in her life, Miss Wain-

wright discovered that there was a form of sorrow more eloquent than tears.

"Oh, dear!" Just those two words escaped her; then she shut her lips. A funeral without a minister, and a prayer, was to her the final drop of human desolation. She had not realized that such things could be, in this Christian land.

Eastwood was by no means a large city; in fact, it was not a city at all, but a large town, with much more than its share of the very poor; owing, some people said, to their having been drawn thither by the prospect of work on the railroads; and others, to the fact that there were large factories where men could find employment; and others knew it was owing to the fact that there were more rum saloons in the town than in any place of its size within a radius of a hundred miles.

This is everywhere the story, in brief, of the very poor. It was the story of this family. It was plainly marked on the father's bloated face.

"John," said Miss Wainwright, "take a

seat with Peter, will you, and help us through. I am going for my minister to come and have a prayer with us when we get to the grave. Peter, drive to Howard Place, No. 36."

It was such a short drive from the Flats! How strangely life was mixed!

"He won't come!" These were the first words which the mother had spoken. Her voice was the very impersonation of utter quiet despair. She had evidently given up all hope of every kind. The words made Miss Wainwright pray that Doctor Brandon might be at home and able to answer her call. He was a student, and his morning hours were precious, and Miss Wainwright was one of the few who recognized this, and rarely intruded. She never remembered having stopped at the parsonage before in the morning. What if he should tell her that it was quite impossible for him to answer to this call from the Flats? These people were none of his.

Doctor Brandon was a comparatively new man among them. It was altogether an ex-

periment. As if to echo her thoughts, the father said, as the carriage was turning into Howard Place: "There ain't no account to disturb any minister. We couldn't pay no one, not if our lives depended on it; and she allowed that she didn't care for that, nor nothing else; and we just managed it."

"Pay!" said Miss Wainwright, with energy. If that miserable mother had not been sitting beside him, she would have reminded him then and there, that he had probably given the rumsellers enough to have furnished a respectable coffin for his baby and respectable clothing for the living; but she restrained her tongue, and only said, "John, ring the bell at No. 36, will you?"

Oh, to be sure of her pastor! He was in his study, and the shades were drawn, to keep out the outside world. The sharp clang of the doorbell reached his thoughts, busy though they were with the grand theme, "The Proof of the Divine Hand as Seen in Daily Providences." It was not half an hour since he had said to the little, smiling boy who answered his doorbell:

"Albert, say to whoever calls, that I am very busy this morning, and can not be disturbed."

He heard Albert's quick feet respond as though the bell-wire had been attached to them. In a moment the messenger, unless he were very determined, would be silenced; yet Doctor Brandon arose, crossed the room and deliberately drew up his shade to see what was wanted. Miss Wainwright's carriage, and on the front seat, a little coffin! Albert's voice had begun his carefully prepared story:

"Doctor Brandon is very busy this morning, and"—then the bareheaded minister took it up.

"Miss Wainwright, what is the trouble?"

It needed but a sentence, spoken low, from Miss Wainwright, before the minister comprehended enough of the situation to make prompt response.

"Certainly, I will. Why, that is very sad. I would have come in a moment, of course. Albert, my coat and hat. Alice," and he turned to explain to the lady who had come

to the door to speak to Miss Wainwright, and had stopped, startled at the sight of the little coffin.

She listened, and nodded, and said only two words: "Poor mother!" Then she stepped forward, and laid a spray of snowdrops, which she had just broken from the bush, on that pine box.

It was well for that mother that the servant of God, who took a seat beside her, saw "the Divine Hand" in this providence, and chose his words with a care worthy of the wise Master whom he served.

"A *little* coffin," he said, in low, sympathetic tones. "Another baby rescued from the sin, and the sorrow, and the danger of this dangerous world."

And the mother, whose eyes had been fixed on those snowdrops, suddenly buried her head in the folds of her ragged shawl, and sobbed as though her poor heart was breaking. They were the first tears she had shed since the baby sickened. What had she not suffered and sacrificed for that baby! No wonder that she loved it! She lived so

far away from the sound of Heaven that not a thought of the sweet, old story, of its beauty, and its rest, and the little children gathered there, had come to her since her own childhood, when she had known it well.

The Divine Hand was with Doctor Brandon. The Divine Voice whispered to him; the next words he said were these :

Around the throne of God in heaven,

Thousands of children stand;

Children whose sins are all forgiven —

A holy, happy band.

In flowing robes of spotless white,

See every one arrayed,

Dwelling in everlasting light,

And joys that never fade.

Did he know how that mother's sore heart had longed for one little white robe to put on her darling, when she dressed it for the last time, and how it had been impossible to her? No, but the Divine One did.

The carriage moved slowly now. Peter, with grave face and eyes, that were dimmed with tears, held back the high-stepping horses. John Hartzell steadied the pine box

with a hand that trembled; these were strange experiences for him. How came he to be standing by that house, and inquiring what was the matter, just as Miss Wainwright's carriage appeared? There had been a funeral of a little baby once which he did not attend, because he was lying in a drunken stupor when the coffin was borne away; and he had stolen the little half-worn shoes of that dead baby, and sold them for the liquor which stupefied him. He did not know whether there had been a minister at that funeral; he was sure there had been no carriage. He could remember a funeral, a baby's, where there had been a white casket, and silver adornments, and nodding plumes, and costly flowers, and dirge-like music, and many carriages; that was the funeral of his little brother; and he remembered his mother's tears, and knew that she had shed bitterer ones for him even before she died, than any which fell on that coffin.

"Better in there," he said, nodding his head toward the pine box, and speaking in

a husky voice to Peter, "better in there than to live to be such men as the father and I have made."

Now Peter was the servant of the Lord. He wanted always and everywhere to speak the message that his Master would have spoken. What was it now? He was still for a moment, then he said:

"Yes, but better to get ready to go after them, looking so that they will not be ashamed to meet us. I've got a baby up there—two of them; I don't want them to be ashamed of father, when he comes; I don't mean they shall be."

Only that. And, like a flash, shone out words in the letter which John Hartzell had received but the night before: "John, I heard that you had buried your boy while he was yet a baby. Do you remember that you are to meet the boy again? Do you mean to meet him only to gaze at his glory for a moment, and then leave him forever?"

The words had been lost last night, in the rush of other and earlier memories, but

they came and glowed before him now. Poor John Hartzell! Had the wretch who sold him rum in exchange for the little shoes, known how nearly his reason was tottering that morning; known how he dumbly felt that he must have liquor, just to drown his consciousness, so that the gnawings of remorse would not drive him wild, he might have felt less virtuous when he told his wife that such a wretch as that ought to die; that he hadn't a spark of humanity left in him, and that the sooner he drank himself to death the better!

Poor John Hartzell! Theoretically, he had known it all his life; for he had been well-grounded, in his childhood, in the facts of Christianity, but it came to him for the first time this morning as a realization that it was possible to see his baby again, and to see him in joy, not in shame and remorse. A faint conception came to him of what it might be to have a Saviour who was able to blot out all bitter memories; it held him dumb, awe-stricken almost. And Peter, sitting beside him, prayed the Divine Voice

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to speak to him, because, his own blundering tongue knew not what to say, and did not know that he had said words which would sound sweetly in his ears in the resurrection morning.

Charlie Lambert was coming down Vine Street, sauntering; business did not press him that morning. He saw the well-known carriage in the distance; he smiled as he remembered that he had probably sent its owner on an uncomfortable search after things that would "fit." What had she done, he wondered; something eccentric, of course. He waited for the carriage, curious to know; it would probably turn down Vine Street; he would like to quiz its owner a little. No, it did not turn; it kept steadily up the avenue toward Grove Lawn, and turned in at those open gates; the cemetery! the potter's field, apparently, for the horses turned down that left side. And on the front seat was a little pine box! This was certainly eccentric enough, but there was hardly room for quizzing!

When the carriage came back to the Flats,

and stopped once more before the wretched little house, certain changes had taken place. The room had been swept, the table set neatly for dinner; a good fire was burning and a kettle on the stove was emitting certain savory odors, and Kate Hartzell stood before the table cutting slices of bread from a good-sized loaf. A middle-aged woman, with her plain, rather coarse gray alpaca dress turned up, and her sleeves rolled above the elbows, was washing a yellow bowl in which she meant to serve whatever the kettle contained.

Kate went to the door when the carriage stopped. The question was, would John Hartzell return with them, or would he slip away down town into temptation and misery? No; he was there, and opened the carriage door with a grave, sober face, for the mother and father, and then for Miss Wainwright herself.

"John," said Kate Hartzell, "I wish you would get me a pail of water; I cannot make the pump work."

She said it as quietly as though she had

been used to asking him such commonplace assistance as this; and he took the pail and turned away as quietly as though it had not actually been years since he had contributed even so much to the comforts of a home.

"You here?" said Miss Wainwright; and she held out her hand in cordial greeting.

"I live almost next door," said Kate, "but I did not know there was trouble here until I saw them going away this morning."

"What! Next door? I thought you lived —" Then she stopped.

"My father lives three doors from here, and my brother John. I have come home."

Her lips were trembling a little. It was a pitiful home for her to own to. Miss Wainwright looked hard at her.

"I understand," she said, after a moment, with a wise nod of her head, "you have come fishing. Claim the promise, child. He won't deny his word. Who is this?"

She was looking toward the woman in gray, who was bending over the savory kettle.

"She lives not far away. Is a new neighbor, she says, who saw the coffin this morning, and came over. She has been here ever since at work; she brought things for them to eat. She says her name is Priscilla Hunter. I never saw her before."

Miss Wainwright's gray eyes had a peculiar look in them. Here was one of her morning errands done for her, then. She went into the little box of a bedroom where mother and children had retreated. Then came out again presently, and stopped for a moment at the door, her hand on the father's shoulder, as he stood looking aimlessly down at nothing.

"You have been through scenes this morning which ought to help make a man of you," she said firmly. "You were one once. I can see it in your face, even yet. Let the flowers spring up all over that grave for your wife to remember forever. Stay at home this afternoon until you get a message from me, if you want a place to work, and I believe in you enough to think that you do."

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Then she turned to Miss Priscilla Hunter, who had turned down her dress and was tying on a rusty, black bonnet, and drawing gray cotton gloves, several sizes too large for her, over yellowed and bony hands.

"Miss Hunter," she said, and held out her neatly-gloved hand, "I was in search of you; I heard from a reliable source that I would find a friend and helper in you. Take a seat in my carriage, and let us get acquainted and compare notes."

So the coarse, gray dress, and the plain, handsome black silk dress, entered the carriage together, and John Hartzell closed the door, bowing in something like his old fashion to Miss Wainwright. Then Peter drove carefully and skilfully down the narrow alley.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HEDGED IN.

I DON'T live so far away that I need to ride home," said Miss Hunter, as she clambered into the carriage, "but then I have to go away down street, not far from where you live, and I would rather ride than walk, if it is agreeable to you. But I think you must be mistaken in the person. I am nothing in the world but an old maid, who gets her living by sewing for the tailors, day in and day out. I'm not likely to be the sort of person you would choose for a friend."

Miss Wainwright surveyed her guest reflectively.

"Why not?" she asked at last. "I'm an old maid myself. I may have a little more money than you, but I don't know as I am

any worse on that account, if I use it properly. Aren't we at work for the same Master? The command to me was to serve with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and to love my neighbor as well as I do myself. Are your orders any different?"

"Not a whit," said Miss Hunter heartily. "I shouldn't wonder if we would agree. What are you trying to do?"

"Everything. I can't centre myself. I tried to, but new things come up every hour. I began with Peter, who drives my horses, but that very day I went to a picnic and got mixed up with a dozen people, who all seemed to belong to my work. Then I tried to locate my energies on John Hartzell; but here are these people this morning, claiming my attention, and I find I am about as much interested in Kate Hartzell as I am in her brother, though I am not sure that she is in need of any particular help. Then there are two or three boys — young men, I suppose they call themselves — who interest me wonderfully, and so it goes. I'm all divided up. For the matter

of that, the verse that started me is not very exclusive. 'Whatsoever ye do,' it said; the trouble is, while I am engaged in doing one thing, another springs up beside it that seems to need doing, and divides the interest."

"I know," and Miss Hunter nodded, her bright eyes twinkling appreciatively; "I get led off that way myself; but there is one thing on which I am centred, and it has by-ways and lanes enough to keep me busy; I'm bound to fight rum, always and everywhere; in whatever form and among whatever people I find it, I am its sworn foe; pledged to circumvent it if I can."

Miss Wainwright's smile was pleasant to see.

"Then I know what Mr. Durant meant," she said. "Good! I'm with you. I complained of not having a helpmeet. We'll work together. Where do you live?"

"Here," said Miss Hunter, glancing from the carriage; "that brown door with an old-fashioned lock on it is mine."

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as the Flats, and was certainly not an improvement on them. Where that region was lined with filthy-looking homes and filthy children, this was lined with saloons and restaurants of the lower kind, and abounded in drunkards.

"Here!" said Miss Wainwright, drawing back in dismay; "couldn't you have done better than that?"

"Oh, yes, I could. There was a clean little room on Webb Street where only decent people live; that I could have got. I sew for the man who owns it, and I could have had it at a bargain, and there's no denying that I wanted it. But I put that want down with some others, and told them to let me alone; I was coming just here to live and nowhere else."

"But why?" persisted Miss Wainwright, "it is a bad place for a woman alone, certainly. What made you think you ought to do such a thing?"

"Well, now, I'll tell you. If you look up and down the street, you will see that there isn't a decent place nor a safe one for

a tempted man, within a block on either side. They all sell rum in some form. This room was to be rented with the rest. There was as evil a looking man after it the day I rented it as I ever saw. He wanted to make a pool room of it. I thought it all over; the things I could do and the things I couldn't. If I had had money, I should have rented the room and fitted it up nice and homelike and hired a nice homelike old man to come and keep it, and had it a bright, clean lounging place for the boys who were not so far astray but that they could appreciate its clean, bright looks and ways. But I hadn't the money, you see, and so I had to do the best I could.

"Oh! you needn't look shocked; I am no would-be reformer trying to turn the world upside down; mixing white with black, until a looker-on can't tell which is which. I remember that I'm a woman. I can't invite them in, poor fellows, and give them a pitying word now and then as I'd like to. I have to keep my doors closed and locked. But all day and all the evening I keep my

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shades up. There's a room up-stairs where I sit and sew; but downstairs there isn't a soul to be seen; only a cheery fire in the grate, and a round table with a red cloth on, in the middle of the room, and a newspaper on it, and the big old Bible that my father used to read out of, and a rocking-chair at the left and a little smaller chair just the other side, both of them empty; and the room as bright as a good-sized lamp will make it. It's a picture, don't you see? I don't know how many poor fellows who stagger by, had homes like it once, where maybe the mothers and fathers sat and waited for them; sometimes I think it is a good thing that the chairs always have to be empty, because they will remind some of them all the plainer that the mothers and fathers are gone.

"Well, there I keep the room, looking as much like a picture of a neat plain home as I can, and I stretch the shades just as high as I can, and then I go up-stairs and make buttonholes, and pray that the Lord will use the one clean place on this street,

somehow, for his glory. I have to leave the 'how' with him. But the chairs won't always be empty, I hope and pray. I want to get acquainted with wives and mothers, and get them to trusting me, and then when they come hunting their treasures who are lost in this street, I want them to learn to slip in here and wait and watch, and if they can get hold of the husband or the son, to drop into this clean spot with him, and try to coax him back. I don't know what will come of it, I am sure. It is the best thing I could plan, and I am trying it. I have only been here a month. The chairs haven't been used yet. Only on Sundays; I use them then. I have a class of boys down at the Mission Chapel in the morning, and I coax them to drop in on Sunday afternoon. They won't stay at home, and home is such a dreadful place for them anyway, I suspect, so I coax them in. I want to have a little something to tempt them with; an apple, or a bite of cake if I can manage it, or even a bit of candy now and then. They are young, poor fellows, and

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they have had none too much petting in their lives. There are only four of them. It is a queer way to work, I know, and maybe not overwise, but I haven't seen my way clear to any other plan. I'm tired of folding my hands and waiting for folks who are wiser than I, to give me something to do. When they get it ready I'll help do it if I can; but while I'm waiting, I may as well work along in those ways that I can think of. I know they wouldn't do for everybody; I wouldn't take a class of little girls at the Mission, because I could not invite them to my house; it is no place for girls to come. But I am old and homely and decent; and almost everybody knows it. A woman of fifty, without any family of her own, can do a dozen things that wouldn't have done for her at twenty, you know."

Miss Hunter had talked on rapidly, and Miss Wainwright had not been able to interrupt; at first because of her astonishment, and afterward because of a choking in her throat. She could not have explained what the thought of that clean little room shining

out of that moral desert was to her. She made one comment only, when the voluble voice ceased.

"Such things take money. You may as well be glad that the silver and the gold are his. I'm sure I'm glad that he has made me one of his stewards."

Then she told to Miss Hunter the story of the prayer meeting from its first inception up to this coming evening, when they hoped to gather for the first meeting. Miss Hunter listened and nodded and asked questions and nodded again, and said with an emphatic voice, as the carriage stopped to set her down at the point she had mentioned:

"Good; I'll be there. The thing grows, doesn't it?"

As the carriage turned the corner, Miss Wainwright saw Mr. Cleveland coming toward them and waited for him.

"I wonder if you are the person I want to see?" was her greeting. "There are two men who ought to find employment to-day, and the probability is that either

Satan's stewards or the Lord's will furnish it for them. The question is, which?"

"I've engaged for life with the latter," Mr. Cleveland said. "Who are they, and what can they do? can you recommend them?"

"For what? Honesty and sobriety and industry? No, I can't. I don't know anything about their honesty; and I know they will not be likely to keep sober all day, unless some force outside of their weak wills is brought to bear on them; and, as for industry, they may have forgotten how to work, for all I know. But for being sorely tempted souls, who have a faint desire to live different lives from what they have of late, I can recommend them. Wasn't that as much as could be said of you, Mr. Cleveland, when the Lord took hold of you?"

"Quite as much," he said gravely. "I am ready to do what I can for them on that recommendation."

There followed a conference 'as to ways and means, and Miss Wainwright went home, to get ready for the evening.

I do not think that the faith of one reached so far as to expect John Hartzell to be among the number who attended that Saturday evening prayer meeting. Yet he was there. Not that he had intended it. It was one of those singular combinations of apparently trivial things, of which we speak when we say "it happened, thus and so."

John Hartzell had found work the remainder of that day in Mr. Cleveland's own grounds, under his watchful eye. He had taken his supper there, a most bountiful one, intended to quiet, as much as food and drink could do it, the cravings of an unnatural appetite. He was still there when Mr. Cleveland's man Peter went for the afternoon mail, and Lloyd McLean just happened to raise his eyes as the man was helping himself at the lock box, and said:

"I suppose you don't know anything of the whereabouts of a fellow named Hartzell, do you? Here is a letter for him."

So the letter had gone up in the late mail, and had been handed to John as he

he arose from the supper-table. Beautiful writing —

“John Hartzell, Esq.”

I don't suppose you have any idea what a strange sensation the name thus written gave to the fallen man. He sat down in the rustic chair on the back piazza, and read the letter. Mr. Cleveland came toward him just as it was concluded. He arranged for future days' works, and complimented John on his faithfulness that afternoon, and asked him finally if he would stop at Miss Wainwright's, on his way home, with a basket of choice apples that his mother wished to send her. He thought of the prayer meeting, it is true, but decided that it would not do to invite John to attend.

John Hartzell carried the apples, and Keziah, as she opened the door to him, happened to remember that Miss Wainwright had said that afternoon: “If I could see John Hartzell, I would give him this box to carry home, just as it is. There are a dozen things in it his wife would find useful,” so Keziah said:

"Wait a minute, Miss Hannah wants to see you."

And Miss Wainwright, on being summoned, was thrilled with a sudden hope, and said:

"O John Hartzell! I don't know but the Lord sent you here at this very minute. If you honestly want to be a man, as you told me you did only yesterday, come in and stay with us this evening. We have met to pray for you."

"John, old friend, will you do this for me, for the sake of old times? If you hear of a prayer meeting anywhere on Saturday evening, won't you go to it? It was in a prayer meeting that I got just the help I needed; help which has lasted ever since."

That was one sentence in John's letter. He remembered the words distinctly; he had sneered over them, in a sad, hopeless kind of way. The idea of *his* hearing of a prayer meeting! He did not believe, in the first place, that there was such a thing in Eastwood; and, in the second place, how would it be possible for him to know any-

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thing about it. And, as for going, the people would think him crazy! Yet here was the prayer meeting, and here was his invitation to enter! It gave John Hartzell a strange feeling, as of one surrounded, hedged in by some solemn, unseen force. Theoretically, he was acquainted with God. He had a general knowledge of the orthodox belief in the presence in this world of the Holy Spirit, and in his power over hearts. Was God calling John Hartzell?

Almost like one dazed, and, without a word in reply, he pulled off his shabby hat, and followed Miss Wainwright into the parlor, where, by the south window, sat his wife and sister!

CHAPTER XIX.

PARALLELS.

MEANTIME the conversation which was being held in Miss Wainwright's parlor was not such as is usual at prayer meetings. For that matter, it was not yet the hour for meeting, and some remark of Miss Hunter had drifted the talk into the channel which led Mr. Jerome Morrow, who was a member of the same church with Mr. Cleveland, to ask this question:

"That sounds, sir, as though you wanted to make the temperance question a party issue. Would you cast your vote in that line?"

"Would I vote for a thing that I have prayed for, for six years, do you mean? What would you think of my praying, if I did not?"

"Ah, but that is begging the question, isn't it? A man might pray for a thing, and yet honestly believe that the time had not come to get it."

"Certainly, he might. But if he had prayed for a man to help him in the direction of deliverance and the day came when the man stood at the door, ready to help, if only some one would unlock it and let him in—in order to be consistent wouldn't I have to help unlock it?"

"But if you were sure you couldn't unlock it," Mr. Morrow said, smiling, but taking up the metaphor, "and, meantime there was another door and another man, that the best class of people were willing to let in, shouldn't you throw your help where it will tell?"

"You need three doors to that building," said Miss Hunter, her keen eyes flashing appreciation of the coming argument.

Both gentlemen laughed.

"Very well," said Mr. Morrow, "let us have three doors—a man at each. The third man neither you nor I approve. For

the sake of the argument, we will say that of the two you prefer the second man, and that you have good reason to believe that if you will unite your strength to mine, we can open the door for him; but if you will persist in your first choice, you will accomplish nothing for your man, and hinder me, and give the third door the right of way. That is the way the thing looks to me." And the gentleman sat back, well pleased with the clearness of his position.

"I will grant all your statements, so far as you have gone," Mr. Cleveland said, speaking with the quiet assurance of one who had been taken over this ground a great many times, and was familiar with every foot of the way, "but there are certain important considerations which you have omitted. I am a Christian, and must look at this, as well as at everything else, from a Christian standpoint. I see, from my position, a giant wrong standing in the way, blocking the wheels of the gospel of Christ, slaughtering souls whom Christ died to save. The man whom I would admit, is pledged

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against this wrong—has been working for
 years to rid the country of it. For the
 sake of argument, we will say that the man
 whom you would admit winks at it—turns
 his back on efforts to suppress it. The
 third man boldly admits it into the country
 as one of its institutions. Now, in the sight
 of God, I am pledged to stand by the right.
 If I honestly believe this giant wrong to be
 the force which the Christian world is called
 to put down, I must in every possible way
 give my push. I may not be strong enough
 to move the giant a single inch. He may
 laugh at me for the attempt. I may need
 your help, and your neighbors' help, to do
 this thing. If neither of you will give it
 to me—if instead, you persist in tugging
 at that middle door, and fail—on whom
 does the responsibility rest, because the
 country is left to the third man?—on me,
 who, in all good conscience, before God,
 gave my push where I solemnly believe he
 told me to? or on you who said, 'This
 right thing can not be done now; so we
 will do one thing which is a *little* wrong,

in order to save ourselves from that which is a good deal wrong?" Does it never occur to you that if a great company of you should do the thing which is perfectly true and right, there would be no danger from the third door?"

"But I do not accept your premises," said Mr. Morrow, with a touch of irritation in his voice. "I do not say that the vote I would cast is a *little* wrong. I believe it to be the best one which can be cast."

"Very well, if you have gone to God for light, and you believe in all sincerity that this is what he would have you do, I don't urge you to the contrary. The fact is, my friend, if you do not believe intemperance to be a giant sin, and the selling of alcohol to be a monstrous crime, there is no argument between us."

"But I do think just those things. I am as strong a temperance man as that. I would be glad if there were never to be another drop of the stuff sold. What I say is that we can gain nothing by pushing in that direction *now*, because we know there

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Mr. Cleveland shook his head.

"Untenable ground, my friend. If this thing is wrong, and you and I do what we can toward removing it, we have nothing to do with results. Let the men who see the wrong, and refuse to add their strength to overthrow it, shoulder the awful responsibility of failure; it is certainly removed from us."

"The other day I heard a woman telling, that down in Watervale, where Mr. Durant was working last spring, there had been more liquor drank this summer than ever before; she said the saloon-keepers were so angry about the temperance excitement, that they just gave away their liquors for weeks, treated everybody who came in, and started some young men to drinking who had been sober before. And she gave it as her opinion that an excitement which produced such results did more harm than good."

It was Miss Hunter's clear, firm voice that made this statement. Mr. Morrow

looked over at her with a sudden gleam of interest. This sounded like an ally for his side, from an unexpected quarter.

"I should think there could not be two opinions about that," he said quickly.

Mr. Cleveland laughed.

"I like to hear such arguments," he said; "it would seem as though their utter absurdity would give us recruits from the other side. Imagine the soldiers in the Revolution folding their hands and letting the enemy alone, because every attempt on their part roused a volley of shot from the other side, and killed and wounded some of ours! What an independence our country would have achieved had the war been managed on such principles!"

"Then the Bible is mistaken when it says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' I am sure, from Miss Hunter's statement, the fruits of that temperance effort were anything but cheering."

Mr. Cleveland's opponent was evidently growing cross. But Mr. Cleveland himself was perfectly at ease.

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"I think the verse holds true, Mr. Mor-
row; it applies to Satan's kingdom as well
as to the Master's. You would hardly mean
to be understood that you think these were
the fruits of the *temperance* effort, would
you? I understand them to be the fruits
of Satan's rage against the work. The
heathen rage still, and will doubtless con-
tinue to do so for years to come; unless,
indeed, God's people fall into line, and ac-
cept him as their leader, instead of trying
to find a more expedient way."

Mr. Morrow moved restlessly in his chair;
he was a younger man than Mr. Cleveland;
in fact, had but just begun to vote at all,
and of course he was of the opinion that
wisdom would die with him. •

"But do you mean to be understood that
expediency has nothing to do with the
affairs of this country? I beg your pardon,
but I think that thing is nonsense; of
course, one must determine whether, all things
considered, this is the wise way to take for
the country's good. Why, the Bible says
that even *God* winked at the times of men's

ignorance. We must use common sense in these matters, and go no further than the people will go with us. What is the use in leading where people will not follow?"

Then he had the benefit of a pair of searching eyes fixed fully on him for at least a minute before Mr. Cleveland spoke with deliberation:

"Do you really mean to use God's forbearance as a ruler, his infinite patience with ignorance, to prove that a man who is not ignorant may do what is just a little wrong, in order to avert what he conceives to be a greater wrong?"

"But I say it is *not* wrong; I tell you I deny the premises."

Mr. Cleveland smiled; he began to realize that he was arguing with a man who was dancing around in a peck measure, and forever coming back to the same point.

"Very well," he said, "then there is no argument between us, I suppose. If it is honest ignorance on your part, you having done all you could for enlightenment, God will forgive you. Of course, I fail to see

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how you can pray that intemperance may be banished from our land, because your actions say that you consider that question of minor importance; there are others before which it must give way."

To all this talk Lloyd McLean had been an amused listener. He had not reached the point where he considered his own convictions very strong in any direction; but he offered the next suggestion.

"I am not very well posted in biblical literature, I confess, but isn't there such a thing recognized, even by Christians, as expediency?"

He was looking directly at Mr. Cleveland, and that gentleman answered him:

"Undoubtedly, there is; but it is where there is no moral question involved. I think you will fail to find an instance in the Bible which can be made to say: 'This thing is right, but then there are difficulties involved. It will open the way for things which are not right, therefore I will do what is wrong in order that this other wrong may be avoided.' How would this

method of reasoning have worked in the old days? Imagine those three Hebrews being interviewed by certain of their friends after the image had been set up on the plains of Dura. 'Now, Shadrach,' says one, 'I sympathize with you in this matter; you know I do. I don't believe in bowing down before that detestable image any more than you do; but, don't you see the time has not yet come for us to assert ourselves? We have enemies, and they are in league with the king; as surely as you insist on defying that command, you will be thrown into the fiery furnace. Nor will that be all: the whole affair will incense the king against our people, and any effort that we might make towards religious freedom would be set back for years. Don't you see you would do no good, but incalculable harm?' Can not you hear the discussion? I can seem to see the whole thing. 'But,' says Shadrach, 'this thing is a sin; it is forbidden by our God.' 'Oh, we know it is a sin; we are not apologizing for it for a moment; we are just trying to show you

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that the time has not come to touch it, and that an effort to do so would result only in harm. What we advise is, that you drop down on your knees at the sound of the music, and appear to worship with the rest. Our God looks on the heart, you know, and he will understand that it is just a matter of expediency.'"

Mr. Morrow at this point interrupted the speaker.

"Do you really profess, Mr. Cleveland, that you think you have drawn a case parallel to the issues of which we were speaking?"

"Sufficiently parallel for my purpose in illustration," Mr. Cleveland said, pleasantly. "I am not holding any argument with the honest heathen, who believe it is right to bow before the image; it is only with those who are in sympathy with Shadrach and his friends, but who think the time has not yet come to act, that I am arguing. Oh, there are points that do not match the figure, of course; you do not need to be reminded that such illustrations are not perfect."

"If one could be as sure of results as the old Hebrews were, it might do," Lloyd McLean said, musingly.

Mr. Cleveland turned to him.

"*They* were not certain, my friend."

"Not? I told you I was not very well posted, but I thought they were."

"Not at all; one of the grandest reaches of human faith shines forth in their 'but if not.' 'Our God, whom we serve, is *able* to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, . . . *but if not*, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' We know that our God is *able*; our faith takes in that fact, but if this is not his will, and we are to glorify him by defeat, so be it; we will not do wrong to save ourselves or our nation."

Whereunto this argument would have tended will not be known, for at this point Miss Wainwright, who had been called from the room some moments before, returned, and, following her, was John Hartzell.

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faces when the man who shambled in after their hostess was recognized. For what purpose had he come? Mr. Cleveland was the first to recover himself, and to announce that it was the hour for opening the meeting, and Lloyd McLean, having an open hymn-book passed promptly to him, with a finger pointing to the number, at once began to sing.

It was a meeting to remember, yet the thing which made it especially memorable was what seemed to the listeners a mistake.

"I think," said Mr. Morrow, when the conversation as to ways of working for temperance had become somewhat general, "I think that our hope rests with the young. We have spent a great deal of time and money on hopeless cases. We ought to turn our attention almost exclusively to our young men, and save *them*; save them before they are in apparent danger. It is only occasionally that a man who has become an habitual drunkard reforms."

Everybody instantly thought of John Hartzell, and everybody wished that Mr. Morrow

would not speak such words as these. They might be sadly true; they were certainly sadly out of place. Why couldn't the man think that perhaps he was stabbing a lately formed resolve in the breast of one of these "hopeless ones?"

Mr. Cleveland glanced in John's direction. His head was drooping, and his whole attitude said: "Yes, I am one of them; I know that my case is hopeless."

"Brother Morrow"—it was Mr. Cleveland's voice—"I beg your pardon for interrupting, but I want to challenge what that seems to say. I know you do not mean to limit the power of God, yet we must be careful how we seem to do it. There have been many cases, which men call hopeless, whom God has saved. We should not have had a John B. Gough if somebody had not worked, and prayed, and waited, and tried again and again. Look at Durant, the temperance worker. He was one of the hopeless drunkards. He heard a man say of him: 'That fellow would be hardly worth saving, if it could be done,

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and it can't.' I tell you, we talk too much about hard cases, and hopeless cases, unless we mean on the human side. God is supreme in power, and the man who is willing to be saved, *can be*, no matter how low he has fallen."

He spoke rapidly, growing eager as he talked. He wanted John Hartzell, and John Hartzell's wife, and John Hartzell's sister, to take in the strength of this thought: "No man *can* fall so low that I can not pray and work hopefully for him; because he may be one who is to show us the power of God in the world, mighty to save, as mighty to-day as it ever was."

He looked over at Kate as he spoke. She had grasped the thought in its fullness; it could be seen in her face. Her eyes were shining like stars.

CHAPTER XX.

ONE OF THE HOPELESS CASES.

SHE came over to him the moment the meeting closed, her eyes still shining, her voice tremulous with suppressed feeling.

"Mr. Cleveland, do you mean *all* that you seemed to say? Do you think no one is hopeless utterly?"

"I believe it from my soul—all that I said, and all that I seemed to say. I believe that we have no right to single out any human being, and say of him, 'This is a hopeless case.' We recognize the folly of such judgments even while we speak, and are apt to qualify our words by adding 'humanly speaking, it is hopeless.' Humanly speaking, all cases are hopeless; but in the sight of God those may be near the Rock who seem to us the most hopeless. So,

Miss Hartzell, don't you allow yourself for one moment to limit the power and the grace of a Saviour. Remember he is 'mighty to save.'"

He was thinking all the time of John Hartzell. He had been thinking of him all the evening, praying for him, planning for him. That man hopeless, with his shapely head, which told of dormant brain power! Young still, and strong physically; what folly to think of him as hopeless!

"Well, then," said Kate, her voice eager, "I claim you; I ask you to pray in faith and in hope for my father. Will you?"

For her father? Old Joe Hartzell, broken in body and in mind, shattered beyond hope of recovery, apparently. He had not thought of the *father*. All his plans had been centred on the son. Would his logic fit that weak, gray-haired old man who had been drinking steadily for so many years? The daughter was watching him.

"Yes," he said firmly, "I will pray for him."

He did not say with what degree of faith.

"When you said, 'No man can fall so low that I cannot pray, and work, hopefully for him, because he may be one who is to show us the power of God in the world,' I thought at once of father, and it seemed to me you must mean him. He has fallen very low. I want to make a confession, Mr. Cleveland; he has seemed hopeless to me. In all my recent plans and efforts, I find I have meant John, and not father. I have looked upon him as one who was impossible even for God to save. It looks dreadful to me, to-night, that I ever could have thought so. I thank you for your words, more than I can express; they have opened my eyes; I will never put him aside as hopeless again. But I said to myself that it must be such as you, who had always honored God with strong faith, whose prayers he would hear. I want you to pray for my father."

As she turned away, Mr. Cleveland said to himself that he would go home and go on his knees, and ask God for faith enough to bring old Joe Hartzell to the One who

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was mighty to save. He would not say to the daughter, now, that he, too, it seemed, was limiting that mighty power.

Kate laid her hand on Miss Wainwright's arm:

"Will you pray for my father?"

This was all she said.

"For your father?" said Miss Wainwright, startled; "I thought it was for your brother."

"It is both of them. You will not leave father out? Say you will not, Miss Wainwright, because I have done it; I have felt until to-night that he was almost hopeless."

"Well," said Miss Wainwright, "I will try. I don't know your father. I shall have to find him out, and do for him, if I take him. I can't pray for a person at arm's length—never could—unless something beyond my reach kept us apart. We will do our best. Working and praying go together. And that reminds me: did you mean you had gone down there to live altogether? How do you manage it? There can't be much money coming in."

"I have a trade," said Kate, with faltering lips. She was being brought back suddenly to the hard realities of the life she had assumed. "I have been taught the dressmaker's trade. I thought if, after awhile, I could get some work to do, it would help."

Miss Wainwright nodded, a gleam of light in her gray eyes.

"Just so," she said; "things are bound to match in this world a great deal better than you have any idea of, when you begin to bungle at them. I was thinking of that poor mother and the children she has left. They need clothes of all sorts—dresses, and everything else—and I dare say there are plenty of others who do. I'm not worth much at sewing; never was; I can't sit still long enough to accomplish anything. But I'll tell you what I can do—pay other people for their work. We'll have a partnership; I'll furnish material, and pay for the work; you do the work, and some of those poor things will do the wearing. I begin to see daylight."

Kate could only smile in answer. She would not have trusted her voice just then. Miss Wainwright's ways of working were peculiar, certainly.

Meantime, the other workers in this drama of life were in the usual state of unconsciousness as to how they were to fit in. To Holly Copeland the evening began in disappointment. You will possibly remember that he was to have accompanied Mildred to the temperance prayer meeting. He came to her with troubled face a little before the hour of meeting. So sorry he was—and face and voice showed this as well as words—father had been sent for to go out of town, and there were two packages of medicine, with directions, both of which must be delivered at once, and the people lived as far away from Miss Wainwright's as they well could, and he must be the messenger.

Mildred was sympathetic. Sorry not to have his company, but he must not mind, since he had so important a duty calling him in another direction. She might see

some of her friends passing, and join them, but if not, it was all right. Miss Wainwright would see that it was an excellent excuse for them both.

"What is that?" said Doctor Copeland, from his office. "Were you going to Miss Wainwright's? I shall drive past her place in about twenty minutes. I can drop you there, and call for you on my return. I shall not be later than nine o'clock."

So Mildred and the doctor rode away in comfort, the latter well pleased with his cheery companion. And Holly had trudged away, whistling, to keep back his disappointment. He was fond of Mildred; he had liked the idea of being her escort, and he had liked the idea of meeting Kate Hartzell, who would be sure to be at the prayer meeting. But there was no help for it now. This long walk alone must be taken.

His errands were faithfully done, and he was returning from them, whistling still. He had just settled in his mind that it would not be polite to walk down to Miss Wainwright's for Mildred, when his father

had promised to call for her, since it was quite too late to think of making attendance at the meeting an excuse for coming. Probably Mildred would rather ride than walk with a little boy like him. He was just passing Jim Moxen's saloon. It was brightly lighted, and behind the closely-drawn curtains came sounds of loud voices and coarse laughter.

"I think they need to pray," said Holly, to himself, in indignation. "I wonder if John Hartzell is there? That is the saloon he goes to most. Awful place! I don't know what poor Kate can do. I wish I were a man; I know that I'd find a way to help, seems to me."

What was that?

The door opened suddenly, a flood of light streamed out on the dark alley. A dark object seemed for a moment to swing in the air, and then land heavily on the sidewalk. At the same instant a heavy boot was drawn within the saloon, and the door was closed again. Holly stopped whistling. Something, or somebody, had been kicked

out, and lay there in the gutter. Could it be a man? He came, all trembling with indignation and excitement, and bent over the thing. He touched it, and it moved and groaned slightly. Yes, it was a man. A very dim light from a street lamp on the corner below, revealed so much to his earnest gaze. Whoever it was, he had hit his head on the sharp stones of the sidewalk, and blood was trickling down his face. Holly uttered an exclamation of horror. What if the poor fellow should die out there in the ditch? The street was unusually quiet. He was surrounded by saloons. Should he dare to appeal to any of them for help? A wagon rattled by. He knew the whistle of the driver.

"Jake!" he shouted; "hello, Jake! won't you stop and help me? They have kicked a man out of Moxen's, and he is hurt."

"Kicked a man out!" said the teamster in astonishment, stopping his horses and getting down from his wagon. "What did they do that for? He ain't hurt, is he? Only dead drunk. You can't hurt a drunk-

ard much easier than you can a log of wood."

"His face is bleeding," said Holly, "and he groaned when I touched him."

Then both bent over the prostrate form. Jake, with eyes more accustomed to the darkness, peered steadily for a moment, then raised himself to an upright position and said:

"I'm blessed if it ain't old Joe himself, come to this at last! I expected it afore now."

"Not old Joe Hartzell! you don't mean him?"

There was more than dismay in Holly's voice. It had an undertone of genuine pain.

"It's old Joe Hartzell, as sure as you live. I'd know his gray head in a darker night than this."

Holly actually groaned. What would Kate do now? Then he thought rapidly. How could he help her?

"If it's old Joe," he said, eagerly, "let's get him home. I know where he lives ;

Kate will want him brought home, I am sure. O Jake, you will help me, won't you?"

"Why, land!" said Jake, "I don't know as we had ought to. He was kicked out, you say. This is a case for the police; he might be hurt bad, you know, and we might get ourselves into a muss. I ought to be at home this minute with the team."

But Holly interrupted him with eagerness.

"Oh, no, Jake; don't let us have him taken to the lockup. It isn't so very far to where he lives; I know his sister, and she is a nice girl; a grand, good girl, Jake. She has gone home to live, just to help them and try to reform her father."

"Reform her father!" echoed Jake with something between a giggle and a sneer; "I'd as soon undertake to reform a brandy flask."

"You don't know, Jake; Kate will try, anyhow; and I promised to help, and I know she would want him brought home; you see, she is the kind of girl who

would be sure to want it, and father will come down and see him, if he is hurt, I know he will. O Jake, do let us lift him into your wagon, without losing any more time. I will pay you; I have fifty cents of my own. I was saving it for Christmas, but I don't care anything about Christmas if we can only get this poor old man safe home."

"Sho!" said Jake, "who said anything about being paid? I didn't. If I'd do it at all, I'd do it for decency's sake quicker than I would for fifty cents, I can tell you. I'd do it for you, anyhow, I s'pose, only I don't know about it's being the thing to do."

But he stooped over the burden and lifted it with strong arms, unmindful of the groans, or of the fact that other passers-by had stopped curiously.

"What's the matter?" one man asked, pushing among the crowd of boys who were gathering.

"O Jake," said Holly, in an eager whisper, "don't let him stop you."

"I reckon not," said Jake; "just you step into that there saloon, Mister, and find out what is the matter if you can. I'm blessed if we know; unless they got sick of some of their customers and pitched them out; it looks like it."

Whereupon Jake's heavy wagon rattled over the road, and old Joe's unconscious head reposed on Holly Copeland's strong young arm.

Arrived at the house on the Flats, all was dark and still; but a wondering neighbor lent the flame of one sickly lamp with which to lighten the scene, and with great effort the old man was lifted to the bed. Nothing more forlorn and poverty-stricken than that poor bed had ever met Holly Copeland's gaze. He did not know what a transformation it had undergone since Kate took possession of the room. He could not conceive of poverty deeper than this which surrounded him now. He looked about him with a sort of fascinated terror, taking it all in at a glance, his face growing almost manly in its sternness.

"The idea of such a place as this being Kate Hartzell's home! This means rum," he said, turning to Jake, and giving a significant bend of his head which was meant to cover all the surroundings.

"Yes," said Jake, "I reckon it does."

He spoke gravely enough, but not with the tone of dismay which marked Holly's speech. He was more used to scenes like these than the boy was. Moreover, he was one of the victims of rum; he had a bottle half-filled with brandy, in his pocket at this moment, and though he had not the least idea of ever reaching old Joe's state, he could not help remembering that the two rooms in which his wife and three children waited for him, had very few comforts; and the difficulty was rum.

"It is mean stuff," he volunteered at last. "I wish there wasn't a drop of it in the world."

"You do!" astonishment on Holly's part.

"Aye, that I do. I've always said it. I wish to the land I had never tasted it, and couldn't never taste it again."

"And yet you are a man and can vote?"

There was an entire temperance lecture in this half sentence. Jake felt it; he had heard of this question before, and he was acquainted with people who talked one way and voted another; but the boy Holly evidently was not. He was young enough still to believe that what people actually *wished*, they worked for. Jake turned away, a half smile on his face at the "cuteness" of the boy; then gave his attention to the matter in hand.

"The question is, what is to be done here? That old fellow will die, unless something is done for him maybe, though I don't believe it. He has too much whiskey aboard. I guess that is about all that ails him!"

Holly turned in distress.

"I don't know what to do next," he said; "if my father knew it, he would come at once. It must be almost time for Kate to come. She would know what to do. I might wait until she came; only there's mother. I'll tell you, Jake, don't you pass our house going home? Would you mind

stopping and telling mother I'm all right, and am staying with a sick man a little while? And then leave word for father to come down here as soon as he gets home. That will be the way. You'll do it, won't you, Jake?"

"And what will you do? Stay here alone with the old fellow? How will you like that?"

"Of course," said Holly, with a lofty toss of his head. "I sha'n't mind. Kate will be home in a few minutes, I guess."

So Jake went away, telling the boy with his last admiring glance that he was "a brick."

However, Holly was not left long alone. The woman who had lent the lamp was the one whose baby had been laid away so recently. She had tender thoughts of the girl who had come from this house. As soon as she could leave the youngest little girl, she hastened over to see if the old man was really hurt or "only drunk." That was the way she put it; and Holly, indignant, said:

"I should think that that would be enough."

The woman stared.

"It is more than enough," she said, drearily, "but if you lived on the Flats, you would get used to that."

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CHAPTER XXI.

DISCIPLINE.

IT was Holly who met the family at the door. Kate was the first to climb the high step.

"You are not to be frightened," Holly said, holding the lamp so that she could not see into the room. "Your father has had a fall, and is hurt a little; I think not much. I brought him home, and have sent for my father. Do you know whether he has come home yet? He was to call for Mildred Powers. Had he done so when you came away?"

"He came just as we started," Kate said. "O Holly!"

Then she went forward and bent over her father. He was lying quietly enough, but the blood which Holly's assistant had

vainly tried to stop was still oozing from the wound on his temple, and even in the dim light of that smoking lamp the face was gastly.

"What is it?" said John, coming forward. "What is the matter? How did he get hurt?"

"They kicked him out," said Holly, the indignant blood rising to his forehead as he thought of the scene. "I saw it all. They kicked him out of Moxen's saloon. Jake Evans came along just then with his wagon, and we brought him home. They ought to be punished for it." Holly's sentences were mixed, but his listeners knew what he meant.

John's face was dark; he was very low down; he had suffered all manner of indignities; he had felt long ago that his self-respect was gone; but to-night he felt that to have an old, gray-haired father kicked from one of the worst saloons in the town was something to remember.

There was a sound of feet outside, and a quick knock at the half-closed door. Holly heard his father's voice:

"What's to pay here? Is my boy here? Why, Holly, how is this? Kate, good evening; father hurt? Let me look at him!"

He pushed rapidly by and reached the bed. There followed a careful examination, and short, decisive directions to one and another of those who looked on. At last the doctor turned from the bed.

"It is a pretty serious affair, Kate. His head has been hurt. It is hard to tell, just now, what the result will be. I suspect we will have a case of fever. The blow is not so serious but he might rally without much trouble, if the system were not in such a reduced condition; but as it is" — there he paused, and sighed. No need to remind this girl, with her wide-open, sorrowful eyes, what it was that had so reduced her father's system.

A few more directions about the night, a promise to look in, early in the morning, and then the doctor turned to Holly:

"Now, my boy, you and I must get home. Your mother is in trouble about you."

The boy flushed a little as he moved toward the door. He was not conscious of having done anything that should cause a mother anxiety. Kate came to the door with him, and held the light, and murmured, as he jumped from the high step:

"Holly, how you have helped me to-night! You are keeping your promise."

He turned and smiled back on her, his face bright. He would help her all he could—he was sure of that.

Mrs. Copeland was waiting with anxious face.

"What is all this?" she asked, the moment that Holly sprang from the carriage. "What in the world were you doing on the Flats? I did not know you ever went in that part of the town. Here it is nearly ten o'clock, and I alone, waiting to be interviewed by a wretched teamster, smelling of whiskey, to be told that you are up on the Flats with a drunken man! Holly, what does it mean?"

The boy wound an arm caressingly about his mother's neck.

"Don't worry, mother," he said. "I'm all right. I saw a loafer kick an old man out of his saloon door, just as I was passing. And Jake Evans came along just then, and I helped him carry the old man home, and waited until father came. Jake hadn't been drinking to-night, mother; he was pretty sober. I am real sorry I frightened you, but I did not see anything else to do."

"Who was the old man? How did you know what to do, or where to go? I cannot understand it. I thought you were a little boy."

Holly laughed, glanced at his shadow in the mirror, and drew himself up half an inch. He was growing taller.

"I'm getting to be a big boy," he said, and he drew a long breath. He wished, just then, that he were as large as a giant, and had power to sweep the rum-traffic out of the world. "Mother, the old man was Kate's father. He is almost seventy years old. Think of kicking him out on the stones! He hurt his head. Father thinks

he will be very sick; perhaps, will die. If he does, it is murder!"

His mother uttered an exclamation divided between dismay and disapprobation.

"I suppose the poor old wretch had been drinking. It would be almost a blessing to the town if he were to die. What comfort do you suppose such fathers can be to anybody? So that is the way you became mixed up in it! I shall never hear the last of Kate Hartzell, I am afraid. If she mixes you in with her low associates, I shall never forgive her, Holly."

The boy turned eager eyes on his mother.

"I will not mix up with rum, mother. You need not be afraid. I hate it, and so does Kate. It is she who has helped me to hate it. If you could have seen her to-night, you would have understood what she has had to give up for it. I don't wonder that she hates it so. Mother, you never saw such a place to live. And rum made it. I am going to fight rum with all my might. You need not be afraid for me."

But she *was* afraid. She went to bed with a troubled heart. She told the doctor, when he came in, that she would give almost anything if Holly had never seen nor heard of Kate Hartzell; that he was such a queer boy, and Kate had somehow gotten such a hold on him; and now she had gone back among that set, and there was no telling how far Holly might go in his romantic scheme.

"She will just be dragged down," said the mother, "and if she gets hold of Holly, I shall never forgive her nor myself."

"None use!" said the doctor. "She doesn't look much dragged down yet; and the place is five times more decent already than it was. I was there to see the woman some weeks ago, and I can see it has greatly changed for the better already. The boy must see the evil that there is in the world. I would rather he would see the side of rum which shows on the Flats than that which shows in some of our parlors."

Yes, Doctor Copeland, in the parlor of the Flemings, for instance, where your one

daughter is standing beside a young man whose talk is growing thick because he has drank so much home-made wine. But the one in whom she is most interested is not there. He is at this moment in one of the more respectable of the down-town saloons, pouring red-hot brandy down his throat. They will put him to bed, by and by, for he is respectable, and can pay his bill. In this saloon they do not kick their victims into the street; there are two or three grades before they graduate them in that manner. To-morrow the respectable young ladies will bow to Eben Bruce, and say to one another that he is fine-looking. And Holly Copeland will suppose him to be a model young man. Better that Holly should get his lessons on rum from old Joe Hartzell than from such as he. If Mrs. Copeland had prophetic eyes, she would bitterly regret the day that her Fanny met this respectable young man, who is fascinating her, and would have no regrets to spare for the time spent by Holly on the Flats.

Then began work for Kate Hartzell such

as she had not planned. Sore work it was, trying alike to nerves and to pride. She had shouldered her heavy cross with vigor. She had so fully taken in the thought of sacrifice, and toil, and privation, and victory, that the work she meant to do, the vigilance she meant to use, in order to rescue this brother and this father from the devourer, had actually begun to look almost inviting. She felt herself armed for the conflict. As she walked home from the prayer-meeting that Saturday evening she could give little attention to Lloyd McLean's kind efforts to draw her into conversation, so full was she of the great thoughts and plans born of the hour. In fact, she had roused him instead of his doing that benevolent thing for her. She had, when he unwittingly started her on the right theme, talked so eagerly and well, that, as he bade her good-night at the door, he went away, saying:

"Upon my word, she is a wide-awake girl; and a plucky girl, to go into that den to live, and see what she can do. She

ought to succeed. I shouldn't wonder if she would. She ought to have help. I'm half resolved to throw myself into this thing heart and soul, and see what can be done."

He had not tarried long enough to see what was waiting for Kate behind that opening door. If he had, it might have given him an added thrill of determination. For a young and able-bodied man it must be something of a stimulus to think of old, trembling limbs and white hairs being kicked into the gutter. For even though the white hairs belong to a drunkard, they are marks of age and the swift-coming grave.

It is one thing to work early and late; to plan how a room shall be made neat, and a supper inviting out of almost nothing; to think out and work out ways of circumventing the enemy; to keep up heart and hope enough for an utterly-discouraged and deeply-burdened woman to lean upon; to sew, with strong, skilful hand at honest work, which is to bring honest pay, and help to show the watching world that there

is a dignified intention to carry this thing through, and support one's self and one's flesh and blood. Kate was ready for all this. It is another thing to sit day after day, and night after night, beside a worn-out old body, from which the living part seems to have gone away, leaving utter darkness behind; to feed the almost breathless body, at intervals, with sips of food which charity has provided; to give, occasionally, a fresh pillow, provided by charity; to shade a lamp, which is decent because charity has seen to it that a decent one came into the room; to watch and wait, with folded hands, and yet with hands which must remain there, folded, ready for emergencies. And to feel almost certain that the emergency will be, perhaps, a gasp and a struggle, and then utter and eternal silence.

This was Kate Hartzell's work; and for this she was not prepared. She felt like a caged lion. She felt, at times, as though she must go out and scream! Anything to get away from that bed, made neat by

other help than hers; kept neat, because Miss Wainwright, Mr. Cleveland, and his mother, and two or three others, were charitable. The very oranges, provided by the thoughtfulness of Mildred Powers, at times so chafed her poor, overwrought nerves, that it seemed to her she must throw them somewhere out of sight.

Yet, sit there she must, and watch and wait. Only relieved for a few hours at a time by the sister-in-law, who was too much worn with insufficient food and a broken heart to be worth much as a watcher. As for John, he was at work, and Mr. Cleveland, and Lloyd McLean, and Miss Hunter, and some others about whom Kate did not know so much, were doing her watching for her. So far, they were doing it well. John came home each night, sober, grave, ready to sit for a while by his father, and let Kate rest. But even this respite she must not take.

"I don't dare to trust him," would Mr. Cleveland say, shaking his head; "he has been working hard, and he is keeping up a

ferce struggle during these days—fiercer than you or I can imagine. He needs his long night's quiet sleep, or the battle will go against him."

And so, because John Hartzell had chosen to throw away his manhood, it could not be trusted during this strain, and the frail girl must come to the rescue and let him sleep. There were times when Kate curled her lip over it all, and said to herself that a man who had no more manhood than that, ought to go down. But this she did not mean.

Mrs. John Hartzell's life was certainly passing more quietly, during these days, than it had for years. She kept the small room neat, and cooked as good food as she could, with the necessity upon them of keeping the fire low, because of the sick man. She made earnest efforts to have the dishes she prepared for Kate look inviting. But poor Kate was getting where she could not touch them. She utterly loathed the bread of charity. Particularly repugnant to her were the broths, and jellies, and custards, that

came from Mrs. Copeland's well-stocked home. Mrs. Copeland had relented to the degree that she supposed the poor wretch must have something palatable to eat; so she constantly sent it, but she never came to look in on poor Kate, nor sent her a message; and Kate, worn as she was with watching and excitement, resented this treatment as she had not in the days when it was first offered. Felt insulted—felt that she would rather starve than to eat food of that woman's providing. Indeed, during this hard time, I am not sure but the only warm corner of Kate's heart was kept for the boy Holly. His visits were rare—his mother took care of that. She would not have him going to the Flats under any pretext whatever; and so, save on those rare occasions when the doctor called for his company to hold the horse or to do the errands, Kate saw none of him. Yet hardly a day passed in which she did not get some simple boyish reminder of his sympathy. Often it was an apple, which she could not eat; sometimes it was a choice confection, which

the doctor would produce with an amused smile and a — "Kate, here is something that Holly was sure you would like." Sometimes it was a hurriedly penciled note — "Kate, I don't forget. I am watching for chances to help." One night it was — "O Kate, I know he is very bad. Father says so. But I wouldn't give up hoping. I think he will speak to you again, and maybe tell you some good news. I dreamed last night that he did. Kate, I have been praying for him, and maybe my dream was an answer." Kate cried a little over that letter. She had given up hoping that the living death on the bed would ever use human speech again. She saw doubt grow stronger in the doctor's eyes. It was a terrible strain to the girl to live so constantly in the presence of death, and feel that it was to engulf her father, and that he was not ready for the plunge. Very few realized through what surges of feeling she was passing. Least of all, perhaps, did the girl herself realize it.

"I wish you would drink a little of it, Kate; you haven't eaten a thing to-day.

How long can you keep up in this way?"

It was Mrs. Hartzell who spoke, in a gentle, pleading tone; and the china bowl which she held had an appetizing odor about it. Kate knew the china. It was Mrs. Cope-land's.

"I can't eat," she said sharply, "and the sooner I break down and am done with all this, the better it will be for me."

Then both turned as a shadow darkened the window, and saw Mr. Cleveland. Kate's face was crimson. She was ashamed of her words, yet had seemed to have no power to control them. He took no notice—was as one who had not heard. He had come with a head-rest, which the doctor had advised for the sick man; and he helped adjust it with few words, and went his way. But that night, just at dark, Miss Wainwright's carriage drove into the Flats. It was unladen of various things for the comfort of the household; then both Miss Wainwright and Miss Hunter came into the room.

"Child," said the former, nodding her head toward Miss Hunter as she spoke, but

looking at Kate, "she has come to stay all night. She is a better nurse than you are; and you are to go home with me and go to bed."

To Kate's eager protest she returned no other answer than to say to Mrs. John Hartzell: "Where is her bonnet? Put it on her." Which Mrs. Hartzell did.

An hour later poor, tired Kate sat among the cushions of a luxurious chair, and sipped creamy milk, and ate crumbs of biscuit. Mr. Cleveland sat at a table in the corner. He had been looking over and arranging certain business papers for Miss Wainwright. As he now arose and handed them to that lady he said:

"These are the ones you need to sign; do it now, please, and I will take them with me."

While he waited, he said to Kate, speaking low:

"I am keeping my contract with you. But you are not satisfied with God's way of doing it, are you? You want your own."

Then he went away.

CHAPTER XXII.

STORM AND CALM.

A FIERCE November wind was blowing, which made the gentlemen who were hurrying through the streets of Chicago, button their overcoats about them. "Cold enough for January," said one and another, bowing hurriedly as they passed, though what they meant by that expression is doubtful, as everybody knows that it can be as cold in Chicago in November as January.

But the wind was certainly piercing. Altogether it was not such a night as would be likely to find one loitering on the street in contemplative mood over water which rolled sluggishly below, impeded by gathering films of ice. So when Mr. Durant hurrying home from detentions, after a late meeting, saw a young man thus standing,

looking down into the black water, the very attitude arrested his attention. A street lamp was near at hand, and though the man, intent on whatever held his eyes, did not turn as Mr. Durant drew nearer, the light fell on his side face in such a way as to give a fair view and the expression of it was startling to a man who had spent some years in the earnest study of faces, with a view to helping their owners in emergencies.

At first he passed, then hesitated, looked back, and finally retraced his steps, and laid a firm, kind hand on the stranger's shoulder.

"Young man, that is rather a dark prospect on such a night as this. What do you find in it that interests you so?"

"That is my business," muttered the man, and he tried to shake off the firm hand. His voice was low, but had a cadence of sullenness in it, such as is born generally both of despair and resolve.

"It is my business, too," said Mr. Durant, speaking with cheerful promptness. "I

was sent to ask you what was the trouble, and how I could help you."

The man seemed to be arrested by this word, despite a determination not to be. He turned and gave Mr. Durant the benefit of a full view of his fierce, dark face.

"Who sent you?" he asked.

The answer was given unhesitatingly:

"A friend of yours, who is more interested in you than you have any idea of. He will be glad to help you in any way that you need help; and I am glad to be his messenger. Now, what can I do for you? I see you are in trouble."

Part of the trouble he suspected, and had, of course, suspected from the first. The man had been drinking; face and breath indicated this; but he was not exactly intoxicated, and there was more in his face than the passing whim of a drunken man. Mr. Durant, who had been perilously near to such places, could have given unhesitating testimony to the belief that the dark water held the stranger's gaze, because it said to him that one plunge in the night and the

darkness, and all this certainty of trouble would be over. There is a certain form of cowardice well known to drinking men, which shrinks only from the known, and is willing to plunge desperately and hopelessly into the darkness of the future world, to get rid of the miseries of to-day.

"Come," he said, giving a gentle pressure to the arm on which his hand rested, "let us walk along out of this wind; it sweeps around the corner fiercely. You can tell me, as we go, what it is you need."

"You can not help me," the man said; "there is no help for me in this world." Nevertheless, he turned and walked with the unknown friend; impelled apparently, by the stronger will against his judgment, or at least his inclination.

"That is a mistake," was the cheery answer; "I told you you had a friend who was willing to help you, no matter what the circumstances. I have also to tell you that he has the power to help. But you must confide in him, you know."

It was a strange walk. Mr. Durant, who

had taken many strange ones during the latter years of his life, felt that none would exceed this. He seemed to have a certain degree of power over this young man, enough to move him forward at least; and he, on his part, seemed impelled by a force outside of himself, to go with this man and watch him, and shield him from something, or some one, himself probably; since himself, in this mood, at least, could be his worst enemy. But he had no idea where to take him, nor what to do next. If the man would only make some explanation of the fierce resolve in his face!

"I wish you would let me alone," the stranger said, at last, stopping in the street, trying to draw away his arm, making an effort to turn back. "What business have you to take hold of me in this way and and lead me along? I had about decided it when you interfered."

"I know you had; and it is the worst decision you ever made in your life; and you know you have made a great many. I came just in time to save you. I was sent,

I tell you; and you won't confide in a friend who is willing and able to help you out."

Two fashionably dressed young men were nearing them, walking with unsteady steps and talking loud, their voices thick and their laughter silly and meaningless; victims they were to the general curse. They were dressed as though they might very recently have come from some fashionable gathering, and the probabilities were strong that they had but lately left the petted darling of some sheltered home, to indulge outside tastes which had been roused anew in some fashionable social gathering.

"Halloo," said one, speaking thickly, "here's Airedale. What's up, old fellow? Look as though you had met a ghost, and it had you by the buttonhole."

Then they passed, the air filled with their rapid laughter. But Mr. Durant almost stopped in the street. He felt a shock like that from an electric battery in his veins.

Airedale, that uncommon name; the one he had especially laid away in his memory.

Three days he had been in Chicago, and three hours at least he had given to hunting for a young man who bore that name; unable, so far, to get any clue to his whereabouts. He had left the firm which had originally employed him, and gone, no one in that establishment seemed to know whither.

Was this the object of his search? If so, he could well account for the impelling power which said "Hold this man; don't let him escape your sympathy and your help." For since the name was written in his notebook, it had been added to his prayer, until he began to feel within him an intense desire to find the man, and to help him, if he needed help. This young man, whom he was drawing on by sheer force of will, was certainly in need of help; was certainly in great and imminent danger, from himself, if from no one else. Could he be the Airedale of his prayers? What did the Lord want him to do here and now, if this were so?

He hesitated, he shrank from it; it

seemed a breach of trust, and yet it forced itself upon him as the thing to do. In some way he must win this man's confidence.

"Airedale," he said, repeating the name as though he had not a doubt of the person to whom it belonged, "you think I am a stranger; that I do not know anything about you. You are mistaken. I know two or three things about you, beside the fact that you are just now sorely in need of a friend. I will tell you of some one else whom I know, and then you may decide to what extent you can trust me. I know Miired Powers."

He could feel the start, and the tremor which ran through the man's frame; yet he replied quickly and fiercely:

"I don't want to hear anything about her."

"I don't wonder ~~at~~ that, my friend. You are disgracing her friendship, and you know it. Still there is a chance to retrieve the past, and live so that you will not be ashamed to hear the name of a good woman mentioned."

"No, there isn't. You don't know what you are talking about. I've gone beyond the chance."

"No, you haven't. I know just what I am talking about, and I know you are talking nonsense. I tell you there is a chance to win the respect of all who now despise you. I am not talking in the dark. I don't care what your past is. I bring you offers of help, powerful enough to blot out the past."

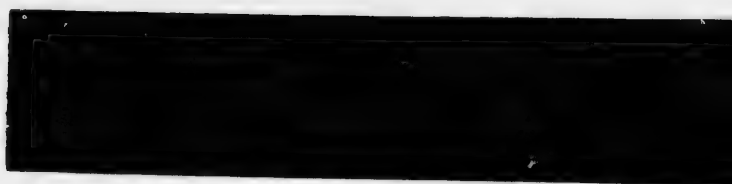
The poor, confused brain of the only half-sober man was impressed in spite apparently of his effort to struggle against the impression. During this time, they had been walking somewhat rapidly; the fierceness of the wind naturally hastened the steps of all walkers that evening, and Mr. Durant's force of character hastened the steps of his faltering companion. They were nearing the former's boarding-house.

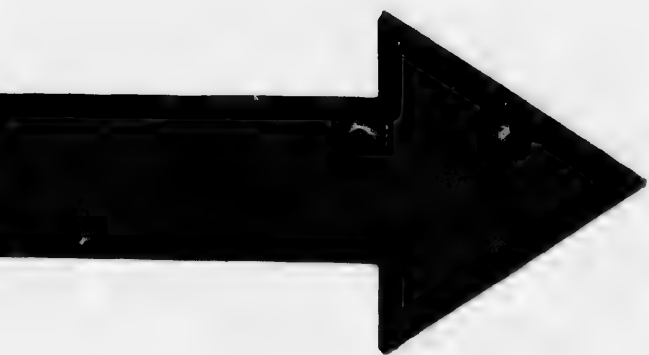
"Come up into my room," Mr. Durant said, as he caught sight of the familiar corner. "I want to talk with you, to tell you something, just as soon as you are able to

hear it. You need not be afraid. I will see that you are shielded from observation if you choose. I assure you that you may trust me." For the man was holding back, trying to withdraw his arm.

"It is too cold to walk the streets, and I have something of importance to say to you. Come, your teeth are chattering now, as if you had an ague fit; you are chilled through. My room is warm, and there is nobody in it. I have a pass-key."

And with one firm hand still on the arm of the half-crazed young man, he contrived to unlock the door, and draw his companion within the hall, apparently more by force of will than by physical effort, though in going up-stairs the latter was needed. The man leaned heavily against his guide, and groaned as if in pain. By the time his own door was reached, and he was with nervous haste applying the key, Mr. Durant felt by the dead weight against him, and the heavy breathing, that something more than nervous terror or the exhaustion of liquor was upon his companion. Indeed, by





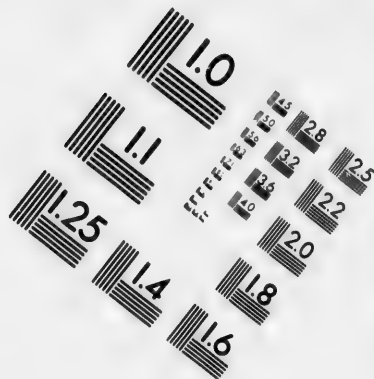
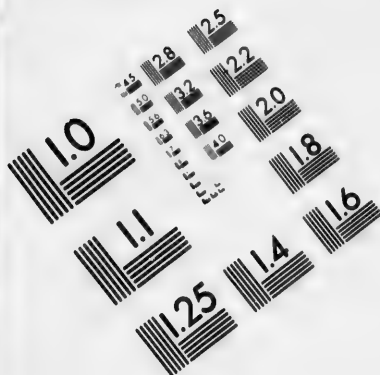
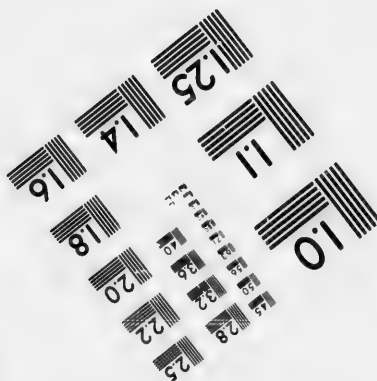
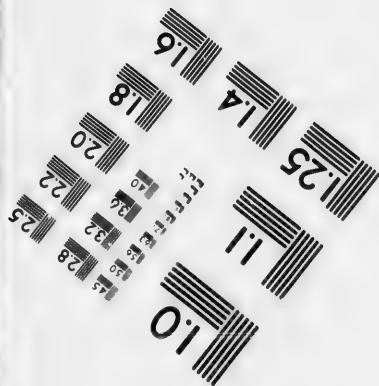
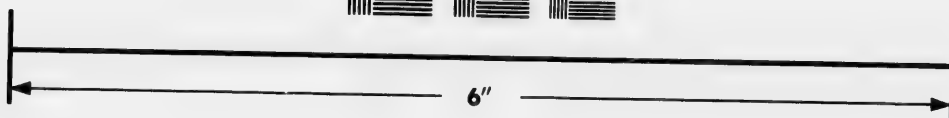
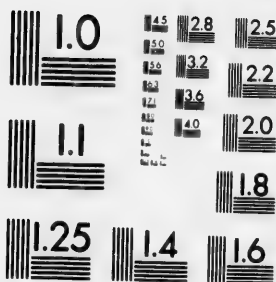


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the time he had succeeded in dragging the poor fellow to the bed, and placing pillows under his head, he saw that he was utterly unconscious, not from the stupor of liquor, but from some more immediately alarming cause. He rang the bell sharply, and sent for a physician, and ordered restoratives of one sort and another, and worked bravely and well for the life of the man thus strangely thrown into his care.

And this was the very night in which Kate Hartzell had drank her glass of milk, and nibbled her biscuit, from Miss Wainwright's hand, and taken her strong tonic at the hands of Mr. Cleveland, and cried.

I presume the milk, and the biscuits, and the night of unbroken rest, helped Kate Hartzell back to common sense. Certainly the tonic did. The sun shone when she awoke next morning. The air was clear and cold. Kate opened her window wide, and took in the crisp, frosty air, and felt that her pulses were steadier than they had been in some time, and her eyes wider open.

She began to understand something of the meaning of her few past days of experience. She was a rebel; that much was plain, and she had not imagined it before. It had seemed to her so strange, so unaccountable, so *cruel*, that on the very evening when she had first thrilled with the desire and the determination to save her father, he should have been thrown beyond her grasp. Why could not God have shielded him from that blow? Why could he not have given her a chance to try? She had been wicked not to try before; she saw that, and she asked to be forgiven. But was it like God to take away her opportunity the moment he had opened her eyes to the fact that there was an opportunity? Was not this very flash of hope for her poor father a heaven-sent thought in answer to her prayer? She had supposed so, and Mr. Cleveland had seemed to suppose so, when she spoke to him. Was it possible that God meant only a thrust, in the shape of that terrible "it might have been?" She did not, and could not, understand it.

You are not to understand that all these thoughts had taken clear and logical shape in Kate Hartzell's brain. They had simply hovered around her during those nights of hopeless waiting and watching. She would have been shocked had she realized half their import. She was shocked this morning, when she saw them in the full light of the tonic which had hurt so the night before.

She was certainly a rebel against the ways of God. What else could these thoughts mean? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Had she really presumed to dictate to *God* the way which he should answer her prayer for her father? But could this be an answer?

Here was her father apparently going down to the grave in darkness and silence; going as he had lived; no chance to right the fearful wrongs of his life. And she, God's child, had begged and prayed him, now that he had opened her eyes to her duty, to give her chances to work! Well, what of it all? Suppose God saw that the only way to reach Joel Hart-

zell was to place him in unconsciousness on this bed of pain. But could he be reached in this way? She did not know. Did not God? If there were any way for *God* to reach Joel Hartzell, since he had given Jesus up to death for Joel Hartzell's sake, would he not reach him? And if Joel Hartzell, in his blindness, would not be reached, should she blame God?

She had cried at first, over the sharpness of the tonic, which seemed to rasp into her very soul. Then she had been startled and frightened over the power of the truth which it revealed to her. No, she had not trusted God; on the contrary, she had felt herself and her father cruelly treated by him. She crept out of bed to her knees somewhere toward midnight, when the strength of this humiliation came to her, and cried to her Father in heaven—not to spare the earthly father—but to forgive the rebel child, who had presumed to be wiser than Father and Saviour. After that she had slept—a long, sound, healthful sleep—and this morning she had awakened calm and brave.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." She did not think of the verse, but something of its spirit was in her thoughts. Yes, though Joe Hartzell never spoke a word on earth again, as seemed altogether probable, she would understand that God had done for him all that an infinite God could do. She would understand that her father had chosen his portion, and held to his choice, even in defiance of *God*. You wonder how she could be calm under such a thought. I can tell you that it rested her. It is a fearful thing for one who loves the Lord to move about under the Satan-inflicted torture of the thought: "He is cruel! He is cruel!" Kate Hartzell had been under that torture for days. When it lifted, and she could say: "He has done right, he will do right, whatever comes," it rested her, made her strong for service.

She came down-stairs with the assured step of one ready for the day.

"Thank you," she said to Miss Wainwright in the hall, and smiled as she spoke. "I did not know that one night could do

so much for anybody. I am ready now for work."

"She really *looks* rested," Miss Wainwright said.

It was half an hour afterward, and she was speaking to Mr. Cleveland. He had called in his carriage, with the morning mail, and offered to take both Kate and Miss Wainwright to the Flats if they wished.

"Miss Hartzell," he said, as he was helping her from the carriage, "Holly told me to tell you that he asked his father this morning whether, in cases like your father's, they were always as unconscious as they seemed; whether it might not be possible that your father knew something of what went on about him, at times, and the doctor replied it was quite possible. Holly seemed to think it might comfort you to know this."

"It does," said Kate; "thank you."

And when he held open the door for her to pass, she said again:

"Mr. Cleveland, thank you."

This time she did not mean for the in-

formation from Holly, nor yet for the ride home, but she left him to think what he would, and passed on, with Miss Wainwright into the room, and to her father's bedside; a watcher, with a new lease of strength and patience.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

SHADOWED LIVES.

IN one of the beautiful homes, which are numerous on Pennsylvania Avenue, seated at an upper front window, looking out upon the passers-by, with that far-away air which says, "I see them and do not see them; they are all as less than nothing to me, and I care not what becomes of any of them," was Mildred Powers. All about her were lavish evidences of wealth and refined taste. Nothing, certainly, that money could buy had been spared to make this room of hers a place in which she might delight to stay. But the face which looked out from the bay-window, where birds and flowers were enjoying the brightness of the day, was far from bright. There were traces of tears, and there were

marks of a sorrow which tears could not relieve. It was a young face to be so shadowed; as you looked at it, you could not help hoping that time would efface the traces of sorrow; but certainly they were there now. She was quiet enough; the first storm of her grief had calmed. In her lap lay pages of paper closely written. Something in the way in which her hand grasped the papers would have led you to conclude that they had to do with her trouble, whatever it was. That she had not just now given them a first reading, was also evident; they were held as papers with which she was, and had been for some time, perfectly familiar; but which were, nevertheless, of grave importance.

Meantime, her mind was busy with a problem which she shrank from settling. This letter had been in her possession for three days, and she was still revolving the question whether it was her duty to take it down to her mother.

"Of course, mamma must know," she said to herself, mournfully, "but ought I

to give her the entire story in detail? Would it be wrong, I wonder, to tell her about it, as fully as she chooses to question, and let the rest pass?"

Unquestionably this would be the easier way; there were sentences on those pages which she shrank from having any eye read, even a mother's. Still, ought she, a young girl, to have in her possession a letter, one line of which she was not willing to have her mother read?

"Mamma will trust me," she said aloud, and half indignantly, as if in reply to some suggestion from outside. But all the more did it immediately occur to her that she should be worthy of the trust. The end of the mental discussion was, that Mildred gathered the papers into their envelope and went across the hall to her mother's room. A beautiful room, furnished with the same disregard of expense which had characterized Mildred's, and with the same exquisite regard to taste; though the colors were more subdued, and the appointments of the toilet were for quiet, middle life,

rather than for girlish tastes. The lady who sat by the open grate fire, with a light shawl thrown gracefully about her, and writing materials at her side, was an older edition of Mildred herself. Eyes and lips, and features generally, were repeated. Once you could have said the same of the hair, but Mildred's was a rich brown, while the still young mother's was plentifully streaked with gray.

"Sudden and heavy sorrow brings gray hairs fast."

Mildred had heard her mother say this with a sigh. She thought of it that morning when she was brushing out her long, brown locks. Would the gray hairs come fast among them now? Her sorrow was heavy; so she thought, poor child, and it had been sudden enough; she had not dreamed of anything like this, until the letter came.

The elder lady looked up, on Mildred's entrance:

"Well, daughter," she said with a smile, and made room for her on the couch near

at hand, brushing away the accumulation of papers and a book or two.

"Mamma," said Mildred, talking rapidly and not heeding the movement, "I had a letter come the other day."

"So Maria told me." The voice was quiet, the eyes still smiling. "I have been biding my time. I knew you would want to show it to mother, after awhile, for I saw that it troubled you."

"Mamma," with a little catch in her breath that told of strong and suppressed emotion, "I did not know how to show it to you, but I thought I ought. In the first place, you will not understand—it is from a gentleman, a stranger."

Mrs. Powers removed her foot from the hassock and sat erect, drawing her shawl about her with almost a shiver, and, as Mildred again paused, said:

"Well, daughter," her voice tender, but alert. What new danger was this? The world was full of wolves, and she had but one very choice lamb.

"Mamma, you need not be afraid, not in

that way. It isn't anything foolish. He is a gentleman whom I met while I was with Fannie Copeland. I don't know him much, only he is a Christian gentleman—a temperance worker. He seeks out young men who need help, and tries to help them. I had an opportunity to speak to him alone for a moment. I knew he was going to Chicago, and I gave him Leonard Airedale's address, and said that I thought perhaps he needed help. I did not ask him to write to me, mamma; of course not. I did not give him permission to mention my name to Mr. Airedale. I just spoke to him as you might speak to a good man, of one whom you thought he might be able to help. I did in all respects as I thought you would like your daughter to do."

"I know, daughter. I trust you fully. And now this gentleman has written you about him; pleading for him I suppose; and you are a little afraid to have mother see the letter. But, daughter, it is surely right that I should do so. Thank you for coming to me," and she held out her hand.

Mildred dropped the letter into it without another word, and, passing, went over to the window, where she looked blindly down on the people below.

"There stands Mildred Powers, framed in just the right light to make a pretty picture of herself," said one of the passers-by, glancing up as she spoke. "All the prettier because she is utterly unconscious of it. If that girl isn't a favorite of fortune, I don't know who is. Wealth, and leisure, and beauty and friends; nothing to trouble her, nothing to worry about in any way; and a general favorite with all the people worth knowing."

"Yet she has buried her father."

"I know," and the speaker's tones grew gentler, "but he was a grand man, ready to die; and time, you know, has softened that sorrow. Her father is simply a beautiful memory to her, which it helps her to recall. And her mother is young, and well, and devoted to Mildred. It is difficult to see how the troubles of life, which they say come to all people, are going to get a

chance to touch her." And the speaker sighed, as though she had felt the touch of trouble in no gentle form.

Yet at this moment the sheltered girl of whom they spoke carried the sorest heart which she thought it possible for any one to have, and looked at the speakers with eyes that were blinded by a rush of bitter tears.

Mrs. Powers pushed writing-desk and papers from her, and grasped at that letter with a long-drawn sigh of suppressed disappointment. The one anxiety of her life was pressing up again, and had brought with it perhaps a strong ally, and she must combat her daughter's wishes all alone. "If her father were only here!" The widow did not speak those words aloud. She only sighed them into the ears of the infinite and pitying God.

Then she began to read:

MY DEAR MISS POWERS:

You did not give me permission to write to you, yet I have that to say which is just that you should hear. In the first place I have to ask your forgiveness, and

your mother's. I have exceeded the bounds of the commission given me. I found the young man of whom you told me, and found, as you surmised, that he needed a friend; and, in order to give myself a chance of befriending him, I was obliged to say that I was a friend, or at least an acquaintance, of yours. Now to my story. I was hurrying to my boarding-place on the third evening after my arrival in Chicago. I had spent some hours in search of the person whose name you gave me, without avail. He had left the employment of the firm mentioned, and I could get no clue. On this evening, as I was hastening up town, I saw a young man standing studying the water below him, in a way that boded no good. At first I passed, then felt impelled to turn and speak. I received an unsatisfactory answer, but for some reason I could not bring myself to leave the man. I tried to draw him into conversation, to win his confidence. The more I tried, the more sure I felt that he was in peril, and needed help. Two young men passed by, both partially intoxicated, and spoke to the stranger, calling him by name. I recognized the name as the one you had given me. It was then and there that I exceeded my instructions, and tried to rouse the man by speaking your name, and claiming myself as a friend of yours and his. I think it was because of this that I succeeded in getting him to go home with me. It was well I did. I hope and trust we may, by this means, have saved a soul. He was at that time under the influence of liquor. I just succeeded in getting him inside my own door, when he fell against me heavily; not in a drunken stupor, but

with something more serious. It proved to be a sort of fit. The brain was seriously congested, and the physician whom we promptly summoned gave it as his opinion that the poor fellow would not live until morning. I hasten over the days which followed, to tell you that he is now living, and on the road, we trust, to mental and physical recovery. He has had a very alarming illness, and still lies in a weak state. This is only part, and, perhaps, for his friends, not the hardest part of the story. I have been with him much during his illness, spending the greater portion of my nights in his room, as in the fever of delirium he clung to me. I have learned to know a great deal about his past; and it is a sad record. Of late, he has been going down very rapidly. He fell in with a hard class of young men; but truth compels me to state that he was their leader, rather than their follower. He went astray in almost every way that you can imagine. In many ways that I rejoice to believe you cannot imagine. He was discharged by the employers whose address I had, because of dissipation. On the evening in which I found him, he was not so much intoxicated as to be unaware of what he was doing. He had, as I feared, planned self-destruction. I thought I saw that in his face as I passed. He was in deep trouble, which became clear to us during the time that he lay in delirium. He had become involved in pecuniary trouble; had gambled, as sooner or later nearly all drinkers do, and, in a fit of drunken despair, had forged the firm name of his former employers, for not a very large amount, but quite large enough to send him to the State's prison.

The matter was not sharply managed, and came to light before he had a chance to get out of the country. It was the belief that he was being shadowed by the police, which had determined him to make, what he called, an end of the whole miserable business. His idea of the end was to drown himself. When the facts in the case came to light, some of the Christian men in the city took hold of the matter, visited his employers, secured a stay of proceedings, and eventually secured a compromise. His mother was telegraphed for, and came on at once, exerting herself earnestly in his behalf.

We were enabled, as soon as the delirium passed, to give the poor man the news that he would not be arrested for forgery; that the matter was settled, and the sinner forgiven. He appeared grateful, and shed some tears; but I must own to you—what in your sheltered life, you probably do not realize—that sin has a way of blunting the sensibilities; he was neither so grateful nor so penitent as you might have supposed. I do not think he was deeply overwhelmed with the *sin* of what he had done, but simply with the thought of consequences; and, these being averted, he was ready to take hold of life again. I urged him to sign a pledge to let his worst enemy alone forever, but he assured me that he could do that without signing any pledge; that he had drank his last drop. I hope this is so, but I have little faith in it. Perhaps the poor fellow must drink deeper of the dregs of sin before he will consent to be saved.

And now, my friend, there is another and a very

dark side to this sad picture of a perverted life. There came, repeatedly, during the earlier days of his illness and unconsciousness, a poor, sorrowful-looking young woman; quite young—only a child, she would have been called in a sheltered home, with a loving mother to watch over her; but she has neither mother nor father. She did not, however, look like a sinful woman. She expressed the most intense anxiety for the sick, and, as we thought, dying man. Day after day she came, and begged to see him. When we told her that he was entirely unconscious, and would probably remain so, she broke into a perfect passion of tears, and begged to sit beside him for only a little while.

At last I asked her, as gently as I could, what reason she, a young girl, had for expecting to be admitted to the room of a young man who was no kin to her. I assured her that he had the best of care, the most skilful of physicians; there was nothing she could do for him, how could she expect to be admitted, and why did she wish it?

The poor young thing lost every vestige, then, of her attempted self-control, and assured me, with bitter sobs, that she was the young man's wife! Of course, I was shocked and dismayed. But when I questioned, and cross-questioned, she told a straightforward story. It was a secret, she declared, and she was not to reveal it; she would not have done so for anything in the world—only, if the man was going to die, she must, and *would*, see him once more! I took her to his mother. She undertook to prove the falseness of the young woman's story, assuring me that it was not por-

sible. Earnest investigation on her part, and on mine, established beyond a shadow of doubt the truth of the poor girl's statement. The young man was intoxicated at the time. He had not realized in any sense the step he was taking; nevertheless he took it. They went to the house of a clergyman in the suburbs; and whether the reverend gentleman was so accustomed to the fumes of liquor about young men as to take no notice, or whether he thought the matter was not of his concern, I do not yet understand. However it was, he performed the ceremony which made them husband and wife. That was two months ago last Friday night; since which time the girl has seen but little of him, and it was his deliberate intention to desert her and make his escape to some foreign port, where, he told me, he had meant to turn over a new leaf, and live as he ought. No sense of the solemnity of the vows which he had taken seemed to impress him. On the contrary, he appeared to be overwhelmed with astonishment that even his mother should tell him it was his duty to recognize the young woman as his lawful wife.

"But I did not mean to marry her," he said. "I was drunk when I did it."

My dear Miss Powers, I have thought it my duty to tell you this long, sad story, plainly; for, however painful it may be to his friends, it is necessary that they should know the truth. His steps have been downward for the past year, to an alarming extent. I am to remain in Chicago some two or three weeks yet. If your mother desires me to serve her in any way in this connection, I shall be glad to do so. Of course you will

communicate with her; and if I hear from her, I shall make it my first effort to execute her will.

If there is nothing further to be done, of course I expect no reply to this. Mrs. Airedale is now with her husband, caring for him as a wife can. She is young and ignorant, but loving and good-intentioned, and deceived. She has gone as no daughter could go, who had a true mother; and she has a sad harvest to reap, I fear.

I am at work for my Master, and recognize you as one of the laborers; therefore I make no apology for burdening you with the details of this account. I kept my pledge, and shall continue the name on my list for work and prayer.

Yours in Christian bonds,

SCOTT DURANT.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

A TOUCH OF THE WORLD.

BEYOND a dismayed exclamation at first, when she read of her daughter's name as being spoken in the midnight streets of Chicago, Mrs. Powers, with a glance toward the figure by the window, read in rapid silence through the closely-written sheets.

To describe the various sensations which thrilled her as she read, would be a difficult thing. Surprise, dismay, disapproval, indignation, relief; all these blended. Yet I hope you will not misjudge her, when I tell you that relief was the strongest feeling; that she dropped the last sheet, and with clasped hands, murmured, "Thank God." Not aloud. She would not have had the girl by the window hear her for the world.

She understood the human heart well enough to know that the girl could neither say it nor sympathize with it; not yet. She went swiftly over the story, gathering it into a few seconds of time, as the mind can do. Mildred, her one sheltered and treasured blossom, sent out from her for the first time to the perils of boarding-school life. Sent out, guarded and shielded on every side. Trusted, as the mother exultingly felt few mothers could trust their daughters. She had proved worthy of the trust. The mother distinctly remembered that first letter of petition.

"Mamma, they want me to write for your permission to dance with them at the Friday socials. Madame Farrar says you need have no fears of my meeting any whom you would not invite to your own parlors; she is very particular. They have only the square dances; Madame Farrar does not approve of any others, of course; and only one or two sets are allowed in an evening. She says to dance for hours, is as silly as it is to eat for hours. I don't care much about it, mamma; only, of course it is a little

embarrassing to be quite alone. I am the only one here who does not dance; but then, of course, dear mamma, that is of no consequence at all, if you would rather not."

The mother remembered the sweet wording of the letter; what satisfaction it had been to her heart to feel that all these expressions were true. She remembered just how she had studied over the question; taken counsel over it. She could see now the tap of her pastor's kid glove against his one-gloved hand, as he expressed his opinion.

"We must not draw the reins too closely, my dear Mrs. Powers, else there may be danger of a rebound; not that you have occasion to fear that, of course, in Mildred's case," he had hastened to add, because she remembered she had drawn herself up, and assured him that she had no fear of her daughter; that her happiness really was not dependent on such trivialities.

"But then," he had added, "I really think harm is often done in these ways. The fact is, young people will be young people, and it is right that they should be.

And I should say that Madame Farrar's judgment was to be depended upon. I do not believe in indiscriminate dancing, of course; yet properly managed, it is a graceful and healthful amusement. We must not separate ourselves too entirely from the well-intentioned, well-behaved world, you know, lest we lose all influence over it."

After her pastor left her, Mrs. Powers remembered that she felt in doubt as to whether he had given her any advice, after all. He seemed to have uttered a few commonplaces with which she was quite familiar. Still, he had influenced her. She felt, after talking with him, less inclined to hold Mildred aloof from the amusements which seemed to belong to youth. Not satisfied, but inclined to yield. For the hundredth time since her widowhood, she said with a deep sigh, "If I only knew what her father would say!" What had he said when alive? Why, nothing tangible, or sufficiently definite for her to fall back upon now. He had shaken his head over many gatherings to which Mildred had been in-

vited. "I don't like it," he had said, "she is but a child; she is better off with her mother. Make her happy without these things." And the mother had done so, and held her child to the society of her parents, and their choice friends, and made her happy with them. And questions which perhaps ought to have been definitely settled, were simply pushed into the vague future. Now the father was gone, and Mildred was no longer a child, and was away from home, and mingling with others of her age exclusively. Must she not do in a degree as they did, or be uncomfortable? The conclusion was that the mother wrote her darling:

"You know, daughter, that mother does not approve of much dancing; and the round dances, I think, are positively degrading. I know you will never be tempted by them. I suppose the sort of dancing which Madame Farrar admits is hardly more than a promenade in which one keeps step to music. I will leave the matter to your judgment, daughter. I am so glad to remember that I have a daughter to trust."

And Mildred had written her joyous letters after that about the Friday socials. It was pleasanter to join the dancers than it had been to stand in a corner and look on. They had delightful talks, too, while dancing.

She was introduced last evening to a friend of Madame Farrar's son. He came occasionally to the socials. He asked an introduction to her because she was such a graceful dancer.

"Think of that, mamma," the happy girl had written, "when I never went to dancing school in my life. I told him so, and he said that it was natural for flowers to have sweet odors, and for birds to sing. I might have told him of many a flower which has no odor, and that there are nice little gray birds who do not sing at all. But I didn't. However, I did tell him that I hoped my friends would have a better reason for choosing me than that I was a good dancer. He is very pleasant, mamma, but a little too fond of dancing for me to admire him much. His name is Airedale,

Leonard Airedale. Euphonious, isn't it?"

After that, the "euphonious" name had crept into almost every letter; curiously, too, it was nearly always connected with dancing. "Mr. Airedale and she led the set;" "Mr. Airedale and she danced both sets together, and begged Madame Farrar for a third, but she would not grant it." And then had come a sentence which Mrs. Powers did not like. "Mamma, I begin to understand what a fascination this amusement can become to some people; there is something very delightful in rhythmical movements, with the room full of sweet sound, and bright with flowers, and rich with perfume. I am always sorry when the hour is over. Still, I think it makes a great difference with whom one dances. Mamma, do you mind that I always dance with Mr. Airedale, and with no one else? I don't enjoy it with others, and he doesn't. He is a very fine dancer. Mamma, he says that some of the round dances are not objectionable, and that he is sure I would enjoy them very much."

With wide-open, nervous eyes had the mother read this letter. Who and what was Mr. Airedale? Why had she not taken alarm before? She had thought of him as one of the boys, and considered him as good as any, for her daughter to walk around with in the musical promenade. She wrote some earnest words of warning and advice. Alas, too late! Not too late for obedience, but for peace. The fair daughter, who had gone away a child, confessed that in this dancer she had found a friend. She liked to be with him; liked to hear his talk; liked everything about him; would be willing to dance round dances, or no dances at all, at his bidding. He was not a boy. He was seven years older than she, and a business man—a confidential clerk in a Chicago house. He was here on some business for the firm, and tarrying longer than he had meant; on her account, he confessed. Then did Mrs. Powers make a hasty journey to the renowned school where she had sheltered her daughter from the dangers of this wicked world. She saw and heard

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the handsome young man whom her daughter's dancing had won. The wise mother did not feel fascinated by him as the daughter had done. She did not trust him. Close inquiry brought to light the fact that his habits were none of the best; that he sometimes left the school socials at the discreet hour of ten, and spent the time until long after midnight in some fashionable saloon. No breath of this had Mildred known. The startled Madame Farrar confessed that she had not such an idea; that her son considered the young man unexceptionable, else he would not have been invited to the socials. And the troubled mother did not like to tell her that there were people who did not consider the son himself unexceptionable. She told her sad discoveries to Mildred, who, in turn, told them frankly to Leonard Airedale. Alas! for the watchful mother. She had let a stranger creep into her place in her daughter's heart. Leonard Airedale was partly penitent and partly indignant. A little of the story was true, and a great deal of it

was false. He had been tempted, two or three times, to drink more wine than was good for him. He admitted that he was *sorely* tempted in this way; but he pleaded and promised, if she would be his friend, would stand by him, and believe in him, he would reform his life in every possible way, so that the very angels could not find a flaw. She had it in her power to mold him at her will. He had discovered that life would be a desert without her, and a Garden of Eden in her presence.

You have heard all that sort of thing. It may be you are old enough to smile over it, and wise enough to take it for what it is worth. But Mildred was young and ignorant, and had been away from her mother, and had been caught unawares in the meshes of this fascinating world. Still, she was a true, pure girl, in that she came directly to that mother with the story and the plea. *She* believed in Leonard Airedale. She believed that she held his interests in her power. She was more than ready to sacrifice herself. Not so her mother; she had

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heard before about "molding tempted lives."
She believed in One who could do it, and
that One neither her daughter, nor her
daughter's friend had sought. There was
more to reform, she believed, than the
young man had admitted. Had he been en-
tirely frank with mother and daughter, it
would actually have been better for his
interests. As it was, the mother was as
firm as adamant. The young man might
reform; she would be glad if he would;
but it must not be because her daughter
held out hopes to him which she earnestly
hoped would never be realized. The first
step toward right-doing would be to return
to the business in Chicago which he had
so long neglected. Let him go to his work
and prove himself a man, if he would, but
not a letter, or a line, must pass between
the two for at least a year. She would
have no break in the silence. She would
not allow a message, through a third party,
from the one to the other. A year was a
very short time to the mother. I suppose
it was an eternity to Mildred, poor thing.

Leonard Airedale thought the mother hard and cruel. He did not dare say so in words to her loyal daughter—almost a pity that he had not—but he hovered about the idea, until it left its impress. Mildred would not have owned to another that her mother could do other than right, but she told herself that “mamma had forgotten that she was once young.”

Mr. Airedale went away, and the mother went back home—and life went on. The next thing that poor Mildred did was to grow more gay and frivolous than she had ever been; to mingle in all that was of the world, with a zest that she had not shown before. She was trying, poor creature, to find happiness in the ways which had lately seemed so pleasant to her. It was about this time that her intimacy with Fannie Copeland deepened. Fannie admired and missed the handsome Chicago gentleman, and openly lamented the loss to their circle in his absence. Mildred liked her for appreciating him, and drew nearer to her; and the mother, at home, cried over the changed

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tone in her darling's letters, and listened to her pastor on the Sabbath with a sore heart, as he delivered his eloquent sentences. If only he had cautioned her to make every effort to keep her darling unspotted from the world, the issue might have been different. Yet I am glad to tell you that this Christian mother did not lay all the blame on her pastor, or on her other worldly-wise friends; she remembered that she had an unerring Guide, and had she lived close enough to him to hear his voice reminding her to walk apart, as one who belonged to a peculiar people, she could have held her daughter away from much that had injured.

Well, the days passed, and one day while the mother was praying, there came to Mildred an experience such as she had known nothing about before. It was just a week or two before the close of the summer term, and she was sad at the thought of going away from associations which were fraught with tender memories. She wandered about a great deal, taking last walks and deepening old associations. She wandered one

afternoon into the church, whither she had once gone with Leonard Airedale. It was a week day, but the church was open and the organ was playing. She remembered the seat in which they two had sat—she and Leonard. She would slip in and take the same seat again, if she could. It might be a marriage ceremony, or it might be a funeral—she did not care. There was no door-keeper. It was an open service. So she slipped in. It was a Bible meeting. She had never been to such an one before. She had declined, but the evening before, an invitation to attend this.

How did it come about that the words spoken there should be just the ones suited to reach the heart of this young, troubled soul, who thought her burden heavy? God knows. There was a mother at home praying for her one charge. We shall probably never know, on this side, how far the prayers of the mothers at home reach.

The troubled soul of Mildred Powers found rest that day. When she came out of the church, an hour afterward, she did

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not understand it. She knew that the weight of pain was gone, but she supposed it would return again. She knew that she had felt a sudden conviction that the Saviour who made the human heart, was the one on whom to depend now. She knew that she resolved then and there to turn to Him and follow his leading, but she did not understand what a tremendous difference this would make in all her after life. The weight never returned; not as it had rested before; not even on this sad afternoon, when she stood and looked out blindly at nothing. She knew, even then, that there was an undertone of melody in her heart, the refrain of which was: "He knows; he will not let this crush me; he cares!"

The mother had understood it better. She had shed tears of joy when the sweet letter came which told of her daughter's new Friend. The mother had walked alone in her Christian life ever since the father went away. She had drawn nearer to Christ during these years of loneliness; and by so much more had she longed for, and waited

for her daughter. It seemed wonderful to her, that, born of this trouble which had shadowed her like a pall, had been this great new joy. She began to have a dim notion of the meaning of the "all things" working together.

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CHAPTER XXV.

PLEDGES.

STILL there had been anxiety during all these months. The school term closed, and the daughter came home. Sweet, cheerful, dutiful as ever, yet changed. She never spoke of Leonard Airedale; but that she thought of him, the mother was almost sure. She was interested in many of her old pursuits, but in a quieter way than ever before. She cared almost nothing for the gay world around her. She held herself aloof from society when she could. She danced no more.

"I think I don't approve of it, mamma," she said, "not for myself, at least. I believe I know many girls for whom I don't approve of it. They grow too fond of it. It is almost an intoxication. I think they

are led on, unconsciously, to say and do things that they would not in more sober moments. And, if some are so influenced, can it be good for others to set them an example in that direction?"

All this was satisfaction to the mother. But the daughter's sentence was apt to close with a gentle little after-thought:

"Besides, mamma, I don't think I would care to dance, *now*."

And that part the mother did not like.

After a little, she sent Mildred away to new scenes. Fannie Copeland begged for a visit. Mildred was willing to go; perhaps the change would be good for her. It was. She came back improved; energized, perhaps, is the word. She had had little, or no idea of Christian work in the world. The mother, before her, had none. This mother was not born for a leader, and came in contact with none who tried to lead her. But Mildred had evidently received an uplift in this direction. She began to question about woman's work. The "Woman's Christian Association," the "Wo-

man's Christian Temperance Union," the "Woman's Missionary Society." What did all these mean? How were they working?

"Mamma, why are we not in them?" was the question which startled Mrs. Powers. Mildred, at an afternoon picnic, had been gently pushed forward into the working Christian world, and came home to find her place. The mother was pleased and helpful. She believed in temperance with all her heart. She believed in trying to save young men. But she found herself unwilling to have Mildred think of, pray for, plan for, one young man in Chicago. And that the loyal, trusting young heart did just this, she was almost sure. On the whole, the mother could but feel that the bit of the world which she had let take hold of her daughter for a time, had sowed its seed, and much she feared the fruit would be tares.

Do you understand, now, why, in a sense, this letter was a relief? Leonard Airedale — who had presumed to be her daughter's friend — a forger, a gambler, a drunkard,

was miserable enough. But Leonard Aire-dale a *married* man was an instant and intense relief. Well she knew that girlhood, which at a certain age almost loves to make of itself a martyr, could be blinded with high-sounding words, such as "sacrifice," and "self-abnegation," and "soul-saving." But a true, pure-hearted girl would recognize marriage vows, however recklessly taken, as solemn barriers between her and any attempt at self-sacrifice of the sort which this phrase sometimes covers.

I am glad, though, that Mrs. Powers, with her instant sense of relief, was woman enough, and mother enough not to show it just then. She called presently:

"Daughter, come here." And the tone was so sweet, and so full of tender sympathy, that Mildred turned instantly and sank down in a wilted little mass on the floor, and buried her face in her mother's lap.

"It is a hard letter, Mildred, and yet a very kind one. I honor the man who wrote it, for not glozing over the hard truths in the mistaken name of friendship. We can

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believe what he says in the future. We will try, daughter, to save the souls of this young man and woman. We will try to save the poor *wife* from as much misery as we can, shall we not?"

Mrs. Powers' voice was firm over the word "wife." Mildred must, of course, recognize that fact from the first. There was no answer. There was a long silence—and there were no sobs. At last Mildred's voice:

"Mamma, do you think—I mean, might it not have been possible that, if I had corresponded with him, and helped him to feel that I was his friend through everything, he might not have gone in this way?"

"It might have been!" This was the miserable thought which was evidently tearing her heart.

Her mother made prompt and decisive answer:

"My daughter, no. Don't let Satan wring your heart with any such false charge as that. It is one of the most specious lies that he ever invented with which to ruin

poor women. The young man who could not be helped by the memory of a pure friendship, and with the possibility of a future such as he held out before himself, could have been only injured by being treated as though he were in every way worthy of respect and friendship. Think of it, Mildred. What do marriage vows mean to him? He was actually planning to desert the poor girl whom he had ruined!"

"But, mamma, he was not himself when he married her!" Mildred's voice was hard. Her mother's probing cut her like a knife.

"My daughter, does that excuse him? Will you think for a moment what must have passed between the two, before they reached the point where a proposal of marriage would have been possible. It is time, Mildred, that you opened your eyes to this thing wide enough to see that God, in his mercy, has saved you from a bad man. He has all the elements that go to make up a weak and wicked character. I felt it from the first, as you too would have done, had you not been young and trusting, and

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accustomed to meeting familiarly only those worthy of trust. I prayed God to open your eyes. I take shame to myself, Mildred, that I, who should have been both mother and father to you, was so careless of my trust, and let the world come in with its specious reasoning and steal away my darling. I ought to have shielded you from its snares. I have wept over it bitterly, darling, and I must continue to do so; for I see the experience has left you with a sore heart. You must forgive your mother, Mildred."

"Mamma, dear mamma, don't! I cannot bear it. You never did anything that was not just right."

Mildred was weeping bitterly now. Her mother held her lovingly, and smoothed the soft bands of hair, and murmured tender words, and felt keenly that the world which she had tried to serve, had cast sharp thorns into her darling's experience. But better now than later. Think of that poor, sinned-against, ignorant, motherless girl-wife in Chicago!

While these experiences were being lived in Chicago and Washington, life at Eastwood was by no means at a stand-still. Satan was busy, of course. I have often wondered over his tirelessness. Without doubt the Holy Spirit was also at work; but his co-laborers on earth were neither so numerous, nor so enthusiastic, in many cases, as were Satan's, and the immediate results were not so apparent. Still work was being done. For instance the temperance element had bestirred itself, as the immediate outgrowth of those Saturday evening prayer meetings, and inaugurated a series of popular temperance meetings; at least they tried to make them popular. They engaged a fairly good speaker, and secured one of the churches, and, by dint of much coaxing, prevailed upon a number of young people to take hold of the singing, and placarded the town, giving everybody a cordial invitation to a gospel temperance meeting. The evening arrived, so did the speaker; the singers, a goodly number of them, were in attendance, and sang well; but the audience,

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at least so far as regarded numbers, was certainly a failure. The young man who had come to speak to them, for no other return than the payment of his expenses, had some good things to say, but he had to say them to many empty seats. A few standard temperance people, such as are to be found in every community, were out; two ministers were out, and two were not, and a great company of Christians and nominal temperance people were at home, or somewhere else. This, for various reasons. Some of them did not believe in temperance apart from religion, though who were anxious that this temperance effort should be considered apart from religion, did not appear. Some were sure that everything which could be said on the subject had been said, and what was the use in hearing it over again? Some did not like the speaker's politics, and, though this was in no sense to be a political lecture, they would have none of him. Some asked to what denomination he belonged, and, on being told, shrugged their shoulders, and

remained at home. Some said: "What is the use? I have been to temperance meetings ever since I was a child, and it is all talk; no results ever appear which amount to anything; for my part I am discouraged," and they, too, stayed away.

Well, the people who came, listened, and sang, and did what they could, and, at the close of the lecture, the total abstinence pledge was circulated. Then began surprises for some people. A few advanced, and unhesitatingly signed their names—good old deacons and elders, who had signed temperance pledges ever since they were children. One minister signed unhesitatingly; the other sat still. People waited for him. He was asked to come at once, so there need be no holding back on his account. No, he would not sign. Why not? Was he not a temperance man? Oh, yes, indeed, to the core. But he did not believe in signing the pledge. A man who, like himself, never touched alcoholic liquors, and who settled this whole question long ago, had no need of pledges; to sign one would be a mere

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form, and promises were too solemn things to be made thus lightly! Was ever such absurd reasoning known? A pledge a light thing, because a man knew he would keep it! Yet this was what the minister said. But what about the drinking man, who really needed the help of the pledge? "No, it was worse than nonsense for him; he couldn't keep it, and knew he couldn't, and it was simply teaching him to think lightly of a promise!" I by no means give you the entire statement, only a glance at some of its remarkable logic.

Among those who wouldn't sign was Lloyd McLean. This puzzled and troubled some of his friends, notably Mr. Cleveland and Miss Wainwright.

"I thought you were willing to help us?" the former said.

"So I am; and I'm doing it. Haven't I sung until I'm hoarse?"

"The singing is all right; but just now I want the signing. Why do you refuse such a simple thing?"

"Partly on account of its simplicity. It

is a confession of weakness which I do not choose to make. I'm in no danger from the stuff, and I won't pretend that I am, by going up there and signing."

"Not even to help some one else who is in danger?"

"Oh! I have no influence with this crowd. There is no one here who knows me. I tried to get Bruce to come. If he were here, I don't know what I might do," and Lloyd McLean sighed.

Although he had no conception of the danger in which his friend stood, still he had of late become suspicious that all was not well with him in this direction.

Mr. Cleveland caught at the hint.

"McLean, he will hear of it. He is sure to hear of everything that is done at this meeting. You can influence him by your action, even though he is absent."

But Lloyd shook his head. No, he had always felt a sort of prejudice against the pledge. And there was Doctor Atwood, who evidently felt the same. He might certainly be excused from trying to make a parade

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of his supposed influence, when a minister did not feel the responsibility.

There was still another important one who utterly refused to sign his name, that was John Hartzell. No, he never meant to drink again. He wasn't afraid that he should. He had got down pretty low, he knew; but a man who couldn't stop drinking when he had made up his mind to, wasn't enough of a man to have any talk over, and wasn't going to be helped, anyhow, by simply writing his name.

Lloyd McLean was disturbed at this, and astonished. Why should such a poor wretch as John Hartzell hesitate when he had once resolved to drop the stuff? The man certainly had no dignity to lose, and much to gain, by the step. He leaned forward and added his urging to Mr. Cleveland's:

"Hartzell, why in the world don't you sign off, and show all these people that you mean business?"

"Why don't you?"

"I," said Lloyd, "why, I have no occasion. They all know that I am a temperate man."

"Then it won't hurt you to say so. You won't be singled out for everybody to talk at as I shall."

"Everybody has talked at you for months, for the other thing. Give them a chance to alter the story."

"I mean to, but I'm not going up there to put it down, as though I had lost all my manhood and was not to be trusted without that."

"Why, Hartzell," said Mr. Cleveland, in almost impatience, "I consider that I am to be trusted, and yet I was the first to pledge myself to-night. It is the people who mean business who are not afraid of pledges."

"Then why don't they all go up and sign it? There are dozens sitting around here to-night who shake their heads."

"Go up with him, McLean," said Mr. Cleveland, "and show him that there is one less head shaken."

But Lloyd drew back.

"Excuse me," he said, smiling, yet feeling annoyed and showing it in his tones. "There

is a great difference in our position; Hartzell must know that. I never have fallen. I need no props to stand by. I think he is foolish not to be helped, when he has proved that he needs it."

It was a most unfortunate speech. John Hartzell drew himself up, and the sullen look deepened on his face.

"I'm showing folks that I can keep my word without props," he said haughtily; "I have not drank a drop in weeks, and I don't mean to. No, Mr. Cleveland, there is no use in urging me. I'm grateful for all you have done for me, and for my family, but I can't turn coward to show my gratitude. I've reformed, and there is no danger of my sinking. I hate my enemies too heartily for that."

His face was dark. Mr. Cleveland turned away with a sigh.

"Save us from our friends," he said to Miss Wainwright, a few moments afterward, when the meeting closed. "There were friends of temperance here to-night who did more harm than we can undo in months."

"What did that young McLean say?" she asked him.

"Oh! the old story. Signing the pledge is a confession of weakness. He does not feel in need of any help of the kind; he is strong-willed and not in any danger. Poor fool!"

"Look here," said Miss Wainwright, "I wish you would ask that young man to take care of me home to-night. I can't go alone, and he might as well walk along with me as anybody. Just ask it as a favor. I have a word to say to him."

Of course, Lloyd McLean was too gentlemanly to refuse such a request, though he had other plans. Miss Wainwright was very pleasant company, and said not a word about the temperance meeting.

His nerves, which had been slightly ruffled, were quite toned down by the time they reached the old Wainwright homestead. Nor did he object in the least to waiting in the great, cheerful sitting-room while Miss Wainwright went for a book she had promised to send by him to Mr. Cleveland.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS.

SHE returned in a few moments with more than the book. In her hand she held an old-fashioned daguerreotype case.

"Do you know who that is?" she asked, as she laid it open on the table before him.

A bright, boyish face looked out at him, and the gay, half-mocking smile on the mouth seemed meant for him. He gave a start of surprise, almost of dismay, as he gazed. It was impossible not to recognize in the features a strongly-marked likeness to himself, so strongly marked, indeed, that for a moment it seemed almost as though it must have been taken for his own picture, save that the costume of the sitter was quaint and unfamiliar.

"Who is it?" he asked, quickly. "Where did it come from? My dear Miss Wainwright, are you a wizard, capable of spiriting a fellow back into the years which were lived before he came on the stage? This looks as though I might have been here in person forty years ago, though I don't remember it."

"You notice the resemblance, then? It is very striking. Can't you imagine whose it is? Did you never see a picture of your father when he was a young man!"

"Of my father?" The light tone changed to one of astonishment, and asked, as plainly as words could have done, "What can you possibly be doing with my father's picture?"

"It is a very good likeness of him as he was, not quite forty years ago. Now, you want to ask questions. Where did I get it? What right have I to keep it? There is a story connected with that picture, young man, which I did not suppose I should ever tell; but I am going to. I came honestly by the picture. He gave it to me himself, when he was younger, I

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think, than you are now. We were friends from childhood, James and I. We studied together, and swung together, and whispered together, and as we grew older the friendship grew stronger. If you had known your father when I knew him, you would not need to have me tell you how winning and bright and noble he was. One of the most unselfish characters I have ever known. He was more to me than any friend I ever had. Yet there was something in the way of our friendship—something that grew between us. It seemed at first like such a very little thing. I had no idea it would separate us. There was, in the town where I lived, what might have been called a temperance revival—crowded meetings every evening, and throngs going up to sign the total abstinence pledge. My father was one of the most earnest workers; so was I. I was brought up to it. One evening I discovered that James had not yet put his name to the pledge-book. I asked him to place it on my book. The young people were each trying to see how many signers

they could get. To my astonishment James refused to sign. We talked long together. He was not in the habit of drinking anything stronger than cider. In those days everybody drank that. He said he had no wish to drink anything stronger. And yet he would not sign the pledge! We talked about it a great deal. Evening after evening it was the subject of conversation between us. I exhausted all the arguments I could think of, and James only seemed to grow more determined. There is a great deal about it that you do not care to hear; but at last it separated us. I told him that a man who would not yield such a point as that for me, could not really care for me as he thought he did. He went away from that town soon after. He parted from me in anger, and I never saw him again. There were letters, and books, and various keepsakes, which went back to him—only this one little picture was overlooked. I am more than fifty years old, but I have never had another friend who was to me anything like what James

McLean was once. Perhaps you can forgive an old woman like me for taking a very deep interest in his boy?"

There was a wistful smile on her face, and almost a pleading look in the eyes that bent an earnest gaze on the young man. He looked up at last, and smiled, and tried to speak indifferently.

"I thank you, I am sure, for your interest; and I thank you for your confidence. But I want to ask you if, now, after the lapse of years, you don't think you were hard on my father? Should a good, true man be thrown aside merely for the whim of another, because he differs from her and has certainly as good a right to an opinion as she? That seems to me, to say the least, a one-sided trust."

The kind gray eyes watching him grew grave enough during the impetuous sentence. Miss Wainwright laid her hand on the young man's shoulder, and spoke with a quietness which contrasted strongly with his excitement.

"My boy, you mistake. It was principle

on the one side, and confessed indifference on the other. I believed that it was wrong for a young man to stand in the way of others, even if safe himself; and he believed in proving his power over his own will, by leaving it untrammelled by pledge of any sort. Yet he did not reason in that way about other things; he was willing and anxious to take upon him marriage vows. He did not say that I did not trust him, because I expected him to pledge himself to me before the world. But there is one hard question which I must ask you. Did your father's life prove that I was mistaken, or unreasonable in my demand?"

The brown head of the young man dropped lower, and he had no answer to give. He had passed through humiliating scenes in his own home of which she knew nothing. It would not do to say that his father had needed no safeguards—had been equal to the temptations and snares spread for him.

Lloyd McLean rose at last, and held out his hand with a smile to the woman who was watching him.

"I thank you," he said again. "Perhaps you are right. At least"—and now the smile faded—"at least, if a pledge would have done my father any good, I wish that he had signed one. His was a sad story."

"There are other young men, remember, and your influence is helping or hindering them. Have you made up your mind which it is to be? Besides, I hold it folly in these days for any man not to use all the safeguards that he can. James McLean was the last person who would have been selected as one in special danger. Will you help us all you can?"

He smiled again.

"In your way, you mean, I suppose?"

"Yes; in my way, and your way, and every way that will not be absolutely wrong. You do not think it really would be doing wrong to sign a total abstinence pledge?"

"Not wrong, perhaps, but foolish."

"Well, are you not willing to be foolish, if you can help to save even such a wreck of a man as poor John Hartzell?"

Won't you give an old woman your promise?"

"I will think of it," he answered; and then after a moment's pause, "May I have this picture, Miss Wainwright?"

She hesitated, poor lonely lady! She had not shown this boy very much of her heart. She had not told him what she could have told about that early friendship, about those early hopes. How could she help hesitating? Yet here stood his son. Was not the father's picture his by right?

"Yes," she said, and said it cheerfully. "It is a good, noble face. I hope it will do you good to look at it. And I hope you will trust your father's friend. I never left his name out of my prayers until God took him. Will you tell me one thing which I have wanted to know? Will you tell me how he died?"

"He died on his knees, Miss Wainwright. His last words were a prayer."

"Thank the Lord," said the listener, her voice trembling and her eyes dim with tears. The son went away then. He brushed

the back of his hand across his eyes, he held the little old daguerreotype case tenderly; he had loved his father. The story given him to-night furnished a key to words which his father had once spoken: "A fit of obstinacy ruined me, my boy." He had wondered over it at the time and often since. His father had not seemed to him obstinate; but, on the contrary, weakly yielding. This must have been the one time to which he looked back and counted his ruin. Was *he* weak, he wondered, like his father? Was what he called strong will merely fits of obstinacy?

Miss Wainwright went with quiet step about her house, closing it for the night—an unusual pallor on her face; an empty drawer in the farthest corner of her secretary. She felt as though the one little link that had bound her to a tender past was broken now; the little old picture was gone; surrendered to one who had a better right. He had not known what it had cost her to give it. How should a heart at twenty know what a heart at fifty can feel?

Nevertheless, this woman knelt, presently, with quiet face and voice, to thank God for that one who, years before, had spent his last breath in a prayer. *Her* heart had long since been stayed on God.

The days lengthened into weeks, and passed, leaving Kate Hartzell still at her vigils. The message which Holly had sent her from his father as to the possibility of the sick man understanding something of what was going on about him, had sunken into her heart. She had grasped hold of it until in her long night watches it became not only a hope, but a settled conviction, on which she leaned. Part of every night she spent alone by her father's bed. Part of that time she spent in reading aloud in a slow, distinct tone, verses from the Bible. Verses carefully selected, with a view to bringing light to a dark soul: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." "Jesus Christ,

the same yesterday, to-day and forever."
"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."
"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." These were some of the verses often repeated, which filled the darkened, quiet room night after night. Part of the time Kate knelt in prayer. Slow-spoken, simple, distinct petitions, such as a weak and weary brain might possibly follow: "Lord, save my father. Forgive him now. Wash his heart in the blood of Jesus. Help him to pray." Over and over, and over again, did these cries ascend to God—the petitioner always buoyed up by a twofold hope.

"Perhaps he hears me, perhaps his heart will take up the cry; but, if not, certainly God hears."

So praying, so working, so waiting, I can not say that she was surprised, one night, while she was still on her knees, to hear beside her low words from the man who had been so long silent.

"I hear, Kate; go on."

And Kate, trembling, scarce able to control her voice, went on:

"Oh, Father in Heaven, take my father, just as he is, into thy love. Forgive him, save him, because Jesus died for just such as he."

"Kate," said the voice again, "that prayer about a sinner."

And Kate prayed: "God be merciful to him a sinner."

On the night when she first began to pray aloud, she had cried that sentence, over and over, and over again, into the ears of God. Her faith had not at that time taken strong hold of the hope that her father would hear, only that *God* would. Now it seemed that he had not only heard, but had spoken to the dulled ears on the bed and bade them listen.

"That is it," old Joel Hartzell said; "God—be—merciful—to—me—a—sinner."

He spoke the words slowly, with long pauses between each one. Then, after a moment of silence, repeated them.

"O, father!" Kate said, but he only answered:

"Go on, Kate."

And Kate prayed. He dropped into sleep or stupor, or whatever it was, after a few minutes, and Mrs. John Hartzell, when she came to relieve the watcher, saw no change from what had been for days. But Kate, as she went to lie down on the cot which had been brought for her comfort, said to herself:

"If he never speaks again, I shall have a little faint hope."

And then she lay down, indeed; but instead of sleeping, she prayed, as she had never been able to before. She felt as though God had spoken to her with an earnest of what his grace and power might do.

It proved that that night was the turning-point in the disease which had taken hold of Joel Hartzell's wrecked frame. He spoke several times thereafter. In fact, the very next morning, when Mrs. Hartzell came to waken Kate, her eyes showed plainly that she had been crying; but she said:

"Don't you think, Kate, that father spoke to me in the night! And he knew me, too."

Now, Mrs. Hartzell was not in the habit of saying "father." The nearest she had approached to it had been to say "John's father." She had always felt a resentful feeling toward the father, as though he were the one most to blame in dragging her husband down. Therefore, the tone in which she said the word this morning, told to Kate that in some way what had passed during the night had touched her heart. After that, there were not many nights. The disease had spent itself; but the body was worn out, and would not rally.

Doctor Copeland shook his head next morning when he saw the change, and the wide-open eyes.

"The poor fellow is going," he said to Mr. Cleveland, who had called to see if there were any change.

They stood outside and talked it over. The plans for the coffin and the funeral.

"It will be rapid work, now," the doc-

tor said. "Poor old fellow! Murder, it ought to be called; but it will sound more respectable to say fever." And he sighed.

Not many nights left, but Kate will never forget them. The father lay quiet, and she read and prayed. Only the tone of her prayer changed, because once after she had repeated the words, "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him," poor old Joel had said:

"Kate, that is true. I wouldn't have thought that anybody could save old Joe Hartzell; he was too much for any *man*, but God has done it."

After that, Kate dropped on her knees, and her prayer began:

"Father in Heaven, I thank thee for thy power and thy grace and thy love."

And old Joe said distinctly: "Amen!"

It was just as the gray light of a new morning was coming up over the town, that he stirred a little in his sleep, and threw up one hand slightly, and opened his eyes and looked at Kate and said, in clear tones:

"Able to save!"

And then the wide-open eyes were set on something that Kate did not see, and the old worn, sin-marked face grew strangely still, and Kate bending over him, bending close, saw that no breath flickered the flame of the candle which she held in her hand.

"Kate," said John Hartzell, just at the door, "it is morning; I will come in and sit with father for a while, and let you rest."

And Kate turned toward him and smiled.

"John," she said, "it is morning with father."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

OVERDOING.

WHILE all these varied experiences were being lived in the Hartzell home, and in the home at Washington, and in the boarding houses of Chicago, life by no means stood still with others of our acquaintance. Fannie Copeland, for instance, was passing through an experience which seemed to her to be all rose color. The days were spent in getting rested, after an evening of pleasure; and in getting ready for another of the same character. One of those spasms of activity which seem to take hold occasionally of aristocratic old towns like Eastwood, and to manage them like an epidemic, had seized upon them. Eastwood was gay. That seemed to be the fashionable name for it; and Fannie Cope-

land was in the fashion. She had sprung into it full fledged like a newly-made butterfly. At Josie Fleming's party, certain in the fashionable set had discovered that she was pretty, and well-mannered and graceful, and the gentlemen liked her, and she helped to entertain some who had heretofore been hard to entertain; and she was Doctor Copeland's daughter, and ought to be noticed, so they noticed her. A tea party to-day, a ride to-morrow, a social evening with a few friends the next day, and the days flew by. To each and all of these gatherings came Eben Bruce. For the explanation of his sudden freedom from business restraints and the lavish expenditures in which he joined, I shall have to go back a little and tell you of an added misfortune which has recently befallen him. There was a certain well-to-do old uncle, his mother's brother, on whom neither Eben nor his mother had built a single hope, for the reason that the crusty old man was offended with them both. He had earned a fair sum of money in the soap business,

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and, having no sons of his own, was willing to help his nephew into a comfortable position in the same establishment where he commenced life. He took care to explain the successive steps by which Eben might rise to having an acknowledged name in the firm and a voice in its decisions.

But Eben hated the sight and the sound and the smell of soap. He would make no promises, offer no thanks, feel no gratitude. He never could or would be a soap dealer. He wanted to be a physician, and a physician he meant to be. His mother was partly on his side, and partly on the brother's. When she talked with Eben she spoke boldly of the money advantages of such an offer, and of the possibility that the uncle, having no son, and only one daughter of his own, might leave his nephew a handsome little sum to help him increase his business. When she talked with the uncle, she hinted at the greater respectability of a profession, and the evident talent that Eben had for professional life. The question was an open one for so many

months, that finally all parties grew irritable under the strain. Eben declared himself sick and tired of the whole ill-smelling subject, and hoped that nothing would ever be said about it again in his presence; Mrs. Bruce alternately told her son that he had no regard for his mother's comfort, and her brother that he had no sympathy with a talented young man's aspirations after something higher. The uncle finally closed the matter by declaring that his nephew might aspire to the moon if he wanted to, and turn pill-vender as quick as he pleased, but he need not then, nor ever, expect a penny's worth of help from him.

And, to do them justice, they did not. Eben secured a clerkship, and spent his evenings in earnest work over medical books; and, up to the day when he attended the picnic in such company as Patan, being on the alert, furnished for him, while the Lord's servants were busy here and there, had held steadily to his purpose. But the uncle, as the years went by, buried his

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daughter and then his wife, and finally, when in a sudden accident he lost his life while trying to save another, it was found that his will, carefully made and deposited in his lawyer's safe, dated but a few days after his wife's death, left all his nice little property to his nephew, Eben Bruce.

News of this sudden uplift in his affairs followed hard on the telegram which announced the uncle's death. So Eben Bruce, who had not intended to take the long journey, changed his mind, threw up his clerkship, and he and his mother went, in deep mourning, to the funeral of the soap-dealer. It might not be a pleasant way to make money, but the money proved to be very pleasant to spend, after it was made.

Life is certainly a great bewilderment. I often wonder what the hard-working men would say if they could suddenly come back among the living and see the ways in which their fortunes are being used. One cannot help honoring the old uncle for choking down his anger and his sense of ill-treatment, and making his nephew his heir; yet

I suppose that of all the misfortunes which happened to Eben Bruce that winter, the most to be regretted was the one which brought him into possession of a small fortune to do with as he would. The spirit which had been recently roused in him, was just the one to be fostered by the knowledge that he had money without working for it; and unlimited time at his disposal. He began well. He sat his mother at ease in a boarding-house that was suited to her taste, with a comfortable bank account for her use; then he went back to Eastwood and made prompt arrangements to enter Doctor Copeland's office as a student. It was found to be eminently convenient for Doctor Copeland to have his medical student board with him; so this change was effected. Lloyd McLean looked on at the packing, and even assisted in the preparations for his room-mate's flitting, making, the while, certain dolorous, and the same time comic speeches which covered a sigh over the easier lot of his fellow student.

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they swung the old hair trunk into the hall and watched the porter down stairs. "This is the last of you; one of these days, I suppose, I shall wait for five mortal hours in your reception-room waiting my turn to consult the great Doctor Bruce, and my errand will be to see if you will be so kind as to lend a poor student a work on corns, or bunions, or something or other, that he may study up a case. I shall be gray by that time, and worn to a skeleton, but I shall just have reached the happy hour when I can give all my time to the aforesaid work, with no money with which to buy it; and I shall look up at you with tears in my eyes, and say, Sir, I remember you in your earlier days, before the sun of prosperity had dawned upon you; in memory of those old times when we used to eat hash and codfish-balls together, I trust you will lend me the book."

And so, with much laughter and nonsense, these two who had been intimately associated for several months, shook hands, and their lives separated.

This will account, in part, for the fact that Eben Bruce ran down rapidly, without the knowledge of his friend. It was easier to do it now. The medical student occupied the room adjoining the doctor's office, and let himself in at any hour of the night, disturbing no one, and appeared always at the breakfast-table, hollow-eyed, it is true, and looking wretchedly overworked, calling upon himself the sympathies of the family, and the warning of the busy doctor not to study late, it did not pay in the end. It was not that Eben Bruce intended to ruin himself. It was not that he sought out evil companions and went to ruin with them. He drank, for the most part, alone. It was not that he drank what most men would call to excess. It was simply that his sensitively organized, easily excited brain rebelled against the smallest portion of liquid fire. It was simply an unnatural taste for alcohol which had slumbered all unsuspected in his brain, and which had been handed down to him through generations of men who were not drunkards, but who took

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beer, and wine, and brandy as tonics, respectably under the physician's orders. Poor Eben Bruce, with his finer nerves and his higher grade of intellect, and his keener sensibilities, could not take these things as tonics — could not be respectable even under the physician's orders. His mother was at fault. She had sipped her beer when he was a creeping baby, to give her strength to care for him. He never thought of blaming his mother for the fire that burned in his veins, and had roused into power with the first taste of alcohol. Blessed ignorance of babyhood! he did not know that she was to blame. Miserable ignorance of motherhood! She did not know it either. Neither did she know that he was going swiftly down. She rejoiced over him during these days. They were all ignorant together. Have you never looked on with wide-open eyes that wondered and wondered at the blindness of some concerning their nearest and dearest?

Least of all did Fannie Copeland understand. She knew that her father's medical

student was coming daily into closer relations with her. That he had dropped the formal "Miss Copeland"; she was "Fannie" to him now. In fact, occasionally, when they were quite alone, he had surprised her in some moment of excitement over a discussion, by an eager "My dear Fannie," she had blushed, and tried to look unconscious over this slip of the tongue, but acknowledged to herself that it was a very sweet slip, and he spoke the words as though they might have meant a good deal to him. And so the sweet dream went on. The mother looked on, not altogether unanxious. She asked the doctor whether his student was perfectly satisfactory, and how long it would be before he could begin to practice; and just what was the sum his uncle left him? Occasionally she said to herself with a half sigh, that Fannie was so pretty and so bright, she had hoped, or rather she had fancied—and then she did not tell even herself what she had fancied, but said hastily, "No matter, if they are really attached to each other, and he is a

closer relationship dropped the was "Fannie occasionally, he had sur- excitement "My dear tried to look tongue, but was a very words as a good deal m went on. together un- whether his , and how d begin to e sum his he said to Fannie was hoped, or n she did ad fancied, they are d he is a

good young man, why, happiness is the best thing, after all." And she thought tenderly of her own poor doctor, who had never yet seen the year in which he did not have to plan carefully so as to hold up his head out of debt, when the annual looking over of accounts fell due. This woman had had other opportunities, more brilliant, but she thought of them with a smile, and knew that one day with the doctor was worth them all. It might be the same with Fannie. And she did not much by so much as a heart-throb the one element in the case which might mean misery and danger for Fannie.

The doctor was equally blind. More so, indeed. Man-like, he looked upon his daughter Fannie as a child under her mother's care. Eben Bruce's attentions were the natural outgrowth of the native politeness of a young fellow whom circumstances had thrown into daily contact with the child. Nothing was serious, except the cases of fever and lung troubles which he had on hand just now, and which kept him busy

all day, and anxious day and night. Perhaps the boy Holly was the only one who could be said to be wide awake. With the peculiar instinct which is sometimes so marked in thoughtful boys, he held aloof from Eben Bruce. Not that he disliked him, or was rude to him, or, indeed, had much to do with him in any way; he seemed simply to stand apart and watch him.

"Why doesn't Bruce go to the temperance meetings?" he asked, one day, suddenly, as the family lingered at the tea-table, waiting for the belated doctor, to finish his meal. The student had excused himself, and gone to the office to execute a commission for the doctor.

"To the temperance meetings?" repeated his sister. "What meetings? Where are they?"

"Why, down in the hall. They have them every Friday night; good ones, too. Ever so many people sign the pledge. If you were not so busy going to parties, and things, you would know all about them."

"Do you think Mr. Bruce in special need of attending the meetings, my boy?"

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It was Mrs. Copeland who asked the ques-
tion; her voice pleasant, her eyes smiling;
she did not know enough about the young
man's habits to even imagine that there
might be a sting in the question.

Holly sent a swift look after his sister,
and spoke quickly:

"Why, mother, as to that, I think there
is special need of everybody going. Mr.
Cleveland goes, and young McLean, and
hosts of men who never drink at all."

"They are trying to save the drunkards.
A kind effort, certainly, but it seems to
me rather a hopeless one."

The mother's voice was still composed.
She had no drunkard to save; she had only
a passing interest in any effort of the kind.

Holly hesitated; there was something he
wanted to say, but he was not sure of
the wisdom or the kindness of it. Still he
ventured.

"I guess they are trying to save some
who may be drunkards when they get older,
if they don't get started right now. I know
one thing; if I were a girl, I wouldn't

have anything to do with a fellow who wouldn't sign the pledge. Not in these times."

Fannie laughed, though there was a jarring note in the laughter.

"Why, Holly," she said, "have you been engaged to champion the cause? Seems to me you are rather young for a lecturer."

"I'm not too young to coax people to sign the pledge. I urged Mr. Bruce for half an hour, yesterday, and he refused."

"Why did you particularly want him to sign?"

Mrs. Copeland was the questioner. Her voice simply expressed amusement. The zeal of this young champion for temperance was not all unpleasant to her, but seemed to have the natural, overdrawn element of youth in it.

"Why, mother, for the same reason that I asked others. To get his name and his influence on the right side. And because"—the truthful boy hesitated, and his cheeks flushed; there was another reason—"because I thought he might need its help

himself. Father, may I be excused and take that package round to Dunlap's now?"

"Yes," said his father, "and I must be excused. They are waiting for me at Stuart's, I dare say. By the way, my dear, poor old Joe Hartzell is gone. Died this morning. I suppose poor Kate will need a little help now."

"Dead, is he?" said Mrs. Copeland. "Poor wretch! I suppose that is what has just now fired Holly's zeal afresh."

But Fannie still played with her spoon; her cheeks flushed.

"Mamma," she said at last, "I think Holly goes among those grown people too much, and gets made too much of. He is growing impudent. The idea of his speaking of Mr. Bruce as he did! And setting up his judgment about the pledge!"

"Oh, no," said the mother; "he doesn't mean to be impudent. It is just boyish enthusiasm. He asks everybody to sign the pledge. Why, he coaxed his father into it the other night. I reminded him that he could not take a hot drink, with brandy in

it, now, after he had been out in the cold, and he said he would give up all the hot drinks in the country for the boy's sake. And after all, Fannie, we may be glad that his energy takes such a turn. It is a dreadful town. Suppose he went to the bad? Your father was telling me, only last night, of meeting a man who used to know John Hartzell when he was a splendid young man in college. And look at him now! Think what it would be to have a drunkard in our family, Fannie. Holly may better extract pledge-signers all over the country than take any such direction. Besides, the temperance meetings are sustained by the very first people. You heard Holly say that Mr. Cleveland always attends them."

"Oh, I am not saying anything against their temperance meetings," Fannie said, with a restless air. "It is a grand thing to try to get hold of the drunkards, I suppose. But Holly ought not to be permitted to insult young men who haven't time to indulge in such work. I am sure papa thinks Mr. Bruce is overdoing, as it is."

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CHAPTER XXIX.

"ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME."

HOW did it happen? Who can tell all the hows of these things? Why is it that just at the wrong moment people who have been on the alert for weeks, must relax their vigilance? On almost any other evening of the previous month, it would have been impossible for John Hartzell to have eluded all the friends who were bent on saving him. But on this particular evening, they went their various ways, apparently so satisfied because God had interposed and forever saved old Joel Hartzell, that they forgot the human side of the struggle and went home to rest.

Mr. Cleveland, in slippers and dressing-gown, sat before his open grate and told his mother about the look of dignity with

which death had touched even the old man's features and said, reverently :

"Though I believe it was not death, but immortal life, which left that impress. Is it not wonderful to think of old Joel in heaven?"

It was about that time that old Joel's son descended again into the mouth of hell.

He did not intend it; oh, no; I do not suppose there has yet lived a man who intended deliberately to descend from respectability into ruin.

He returned the chairs, and, in a grave and manly way, expressed his thanks. He went into the grocery and bought and paid for a small sack of flour. In doing so he took out and held in his hand for a moment several quarters and a half dollar while he counted out the change. I will not say that there was not a sense of satisfaction in so doing; there was such a recent past in which to have counted out money for flour would have seemed to him almost a miracle! The grocer was friendly,

and held him for a moment in conversation. He had ordered him from his doorstep more than once, but if the man was going to be respectable and jingle money in his pocket, it was as well to look out for custom. On the steps stood two young fellows, gay, thoughtless, not exactly heartless, save as rum had silenced their higher natures.

"Look at John," said one, "he is counting out the quarters as though they grew on the Flats."

"They are crowing over him down at the temperance meetings; he is quite the fashion, I hear. A brand plucked from the burning. Still I heard that he wouldn't sign their pledge."

"Oh, no, he won't. He prides himself, they say, on his iron will. Think of John Hartzell with a will so iron that a glass of whiskey wouldn't bend him."

Then they laughed.

"Do you suppose he will stick?"

This from a third young man, one with a meaner face than the others. One of those low, laughing faces belonging to the

fellow who has sunken low enough to do anything just for a joke.

"Stick? no, of course he won't. It is only a question of a few days. When one sees the disgusting fuss that is being made over him, one is tempted to wish that he would hurry up and get back into the gutter. Did you see that parade at the funeral of old Joe to-day? Carriages and all that sort of thing. That fellow Cleveland who thinks he was born to rule the country leading the procession, looking as solemn as a priest. I would like to see that man brought down in some way. He is so far above common people that he will hardly bow to them on the street."

What is the meaning of this astonishing confusion of logic? Only personal pique and political differences of opinion.

Mr. Cleveland did not, it is true, recognize this young man as a friend; they had not a thought in common. That they had quarreled, could not be said, because Mr. Cleveland would not quarrel; but that they differed essentially on all questions, was

true, and in the nature of things, necessary. Either oil or water must change its nature before both can mix.

Then spoke the nature which was on the alert for fun:

"It would be a rich thing to see the faces of the fanatics when their pet tumbles again. I declare I should like to be around. I wonder how long the reform will last?"

"I wouldn't be afraid to wager that I could have him in a state which would edify my lord Cleveland by ten o'clock to-night."

"Oh, no, not so soon as that. He has just buried his father, you know."

"What of that? Much he cared for his father! Haven't you heard him swear at him like a trooper? I tell you, John Hartzell is playing a game on the rich old maid; that is all he is about."

"If I thought that, I'd like to expose him."

Don't think I am going to give you the entire scene. I have only hinted at the

motives which were brought to bear on the three natures, as they stood on the steps and watched John Hartzell with his silver. They had never moved in his set, those three. They were several grades above him. It was, therefore, an added pat to his pride when they accosted him in a friendly way and expressed sympathy with him in his recent affliction. It was a most unusual thing that they should walk along the street with him.

"Was he at work now on anything in particular?" asked the young fellow who was searching for fun. "Did he know Burton of the lower mill? He was looking for a reliable man to secure permanently. Perhaps Hartzell would like the chance. Step in here and let us wait for him. He will pass presently on his way up town."

"In here" was a saloon of the better sort. It had a soda fountain in summer, and a refreshment table in winter where oysters were served, and it was patronized occasionally by thoughtless temperance people when they wanted cigars or oysters, and

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John did not hesitate. He had reformed. He never meant to drink another drop of intoxicating liquor. He was as ignorant of his own heart as ever a baby was. He prided himself on his strong will. He was not afraid to go into saloons.

"Have a glass of beer, Hartzell? No? You have discarded the whole thing, have you? Why, I thought beer was innocent enough. Well, some people have to deny themselves, I suppose."

Was there a covert sneer in the tone? Was there a hint that he could not drink a glass of beer if he wanted to? Wild and preposterous to you as it may seem, he honestly thought he could.

What, John Hartzell, who only a few weeks before had told Miss Wainwright that he had tried a thousand times to give up the stuff, and could not? Yes, the very man. Don't you see? He had done it. Six weeks since a drop of liquor had been tasted! The work was accomplished, so he thought. The battle fought. He was a free

man now. Yet the smell of that beer, as the gentlemen quaffed it, made him fairly dizzy with its suggestions. And yet he was not warned. Don't expect me to explain it. I verily believe there is no human explanation which can fit the story. But don't you know by your own observation all about the strange, blind infatuation and foolhardiness of the reformed drunkards, who are trusting to their own will power? If you do not, you are certainly not a very experienced temperance worker.

Where were the temperance workers that evening? Why did there not pass by a man who could help this tempted soul who yet did not understand himself well enough to know that he was in mortal danger? One passed by who might have helped. At least, he might have tried. He did not go blindly; he paused and thought of the danger.

That one was Charlie Lambert. A temperance man? Oh, yes. He drank no liquor. He had no temptation to drink any. A pledged man? Oh, no, he saw no occasion

for that; certainly not, so far as he was concerned. An advocate of the license system? Well, hardly, and yet it was certainly better to have this thing regulated by law, if people must have it among them.

Oh, then he believed in getting it out from among them?

Well, no; he did not consider that expedient. In fact, it was something which could not be done.

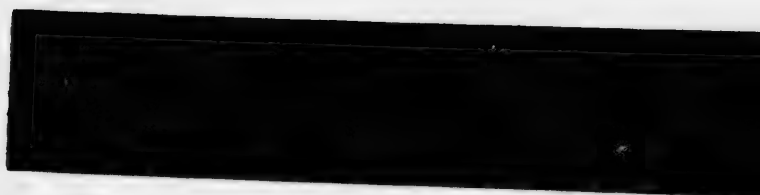
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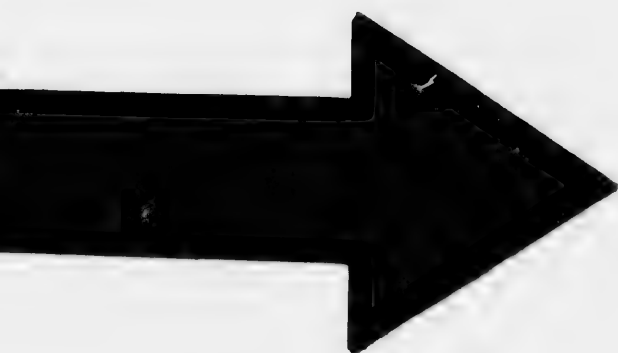
Well, the country was not ready for it.

How was the country to be gotten ready for it? By continuing to accept the business as legal and under protection?

Oh, well, he was not a fanatic on this subject. He believed in individual opinion.

And in this way could Charlie Lambert dance around in a peck measure for a whole week at a time, and call it arguing. Still, he did not believe in drunkards. Oh, no; it was a disgraceful thing to get drunk. In fact, I tell you he did not believe in moderate drinking. He had not so much excuse as that for his slippery position.





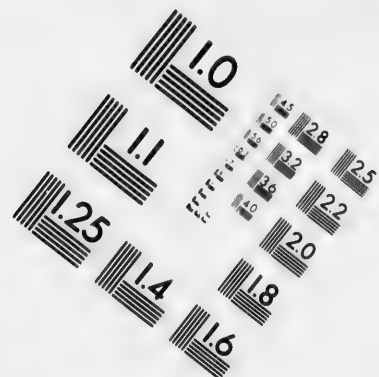
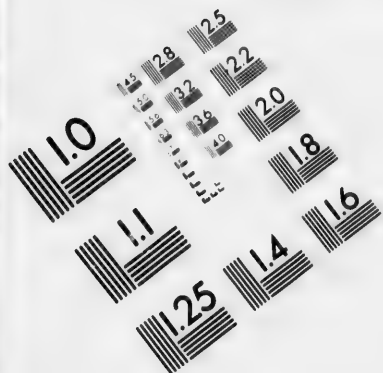
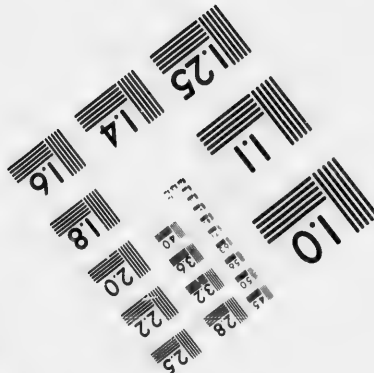
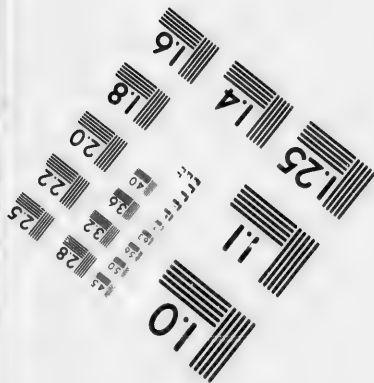
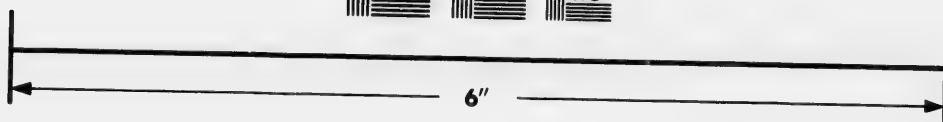
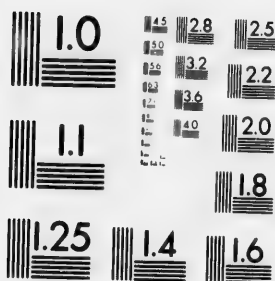


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He knew John Hartzell, and he saw him distinctly in that saloon, and paused, and said to himself:

"That is no place for that fellow. He ought to know better."

Why didn't he go in, and at least look as much in the face of John Hartzell? There was one curious reason why he did not. One, two, three, five young men he saw in there, who were acquaintances of his; friends, indeed, in a general way. The proprietor of the saloon was a good fellow. He often took his lunch at that place. He had stopped there for soda almost every day during the summer. What an embarrassing thing for a young man like him to step in there and try to rescue John Hartzell! It was too much to expect. After all, John might be only waiting for something. Besides, he would go to drinking again, of course; no confidence could be placed in the reformation of such drunkards as he. And Charlie Lambert passed by on the other side.

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prietor, "you fellows are getting too noisy. We don't have such scenes in here. Some of you must get Hartzell out of here; this is no place for him."

This was two hours after Charlie Lambert had passed. By that time the respectable oyster saloon was no place for him. He must go lower down. One of the loungers agreed to take him by the arm and lead him away.

"Coax him home, Jimmie," whispered the gentlemanly fellow who had started out for fun.

He had had his fun, and somehow it left a bitter taste. Jimmie nodded; but he might as well have undertaken to coax a panther back into its cage after it had scented its prey. What John Hartzell wanted now was rum; and rum he would have.

A whistling boy went past just as he reeled into a more pronounced saloon lower down. The whistling stopped, and the boy stood for a moment horror stricken. It was surely John Hartzell. What could he do?

Where was everybody? He stood only a moment, then ran on swift feet around the corner. Doctor Brandon's house was the nearest, but Doctor Brandon was not at home. He hurried up the stairs to Lloyd McLean's boarding-house, but Lloyd McLean's room was dark, and his door was locked. Then home, father might have come, and father would go to the rescue. No, Doctor Copeland had not returned. The boy was panting, and almost breathless.

He burst into the parlor, where sat Fannie and Mr. Bruce. He had but one question to ask:

"Do you know where Mr. McLean is?"

"No. Certainly Eben Bruce did not know. He had not seen McLean in a week. What was the matter?"

"They have got hold of John Hartzell," Holly said still breathless. "They are making him drink. If I knew where he was, I guess he would know something to do. He is with the others a great deal."

The pronouns in the latter part of the sentence referred to Lloyd McLean. Then

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the boy rushed away. Fannie and her friend looked at each other.

"Poor fellow!" said Fannie. "He is almost wild over that wretch of a John Hartzell. He was so attached to Kate. He seems to be determined that John shall reform. I suppose nothing is more hopeless. It is only a question of time when people get as low as he."

Eben Bruce shivered a little.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I suppose it is only a question of time."

Holly rushed to his mother.

"O, mother, if you would let me just run down to Mr. Cleveland's. I can go in fifteen minutes. I came home at half-past nine, as you said. But they have got hold of him, the fellows have, and they are making him drink. Mr. Cleveland would know what to do. May I go, mother? Say yes quick; do, please. I have lost so much time already."

Could she let him go? He was only a boy, and the streets were full of snares for boys; and it was the wildest sort of an

idea. What could Mr. Cleveland or any man do? Poor, miserable wretch! Of course, he would drink. As if everybody did not know that. She was sorry for Kate. Yes, she was genuinely sorry; and had sent her a black cashmere dress to wear to the funeral, and a black wrap, which she told her to keep; but Kate had been utterly wild to hope anything for that miserable brother. It was a good thing that the father had died. It was an infinite pity that the brother had not died years ago. Holly must not think of such a thing as going out again. It would do no good; it might do great harm.

Then Holly went away to his room. He kissed his mother good-night, mournfully, his lip quivering and quivering, so that he could hardly bear it. Once in his room, the door locked, he sat down, all hot and trembling as he was, and cried great burning tears. Then he walked up and down the room, even as Kate and John Hartzell's wife were doing at that moment.

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young fist. "I hate it! I wish I were a man this minute. I would do lots of things. I would have rooms, bright, light rooms, and people on the watch, and a man at every corner to run to when folks were in trouble, and I would fight it all ways at once, and I will. I'll fight until there is not a drop, not a drop to be had on the globe! That's the thing. None to be had. Then they *can't* get it. That will end the matter. And I believe it is the only thing that will. God wants it so, for he says that no drunkard shall go to heaven, and rum makes drunkards, and always has, and always will. Then people who want folks to go to heaven have got to get rid of the rum. There is no other way."

I am glad to tell you that this boy got down at last on his knees. There he sobbed out his bitter story, and from thence he arose calmed. He had done what he could; it is true that the sum of it had been nothing. But the Divine Heart whispered to him: "Never mind, my boy, God knows, and God reigns."

Well, there is a rift, I suppose, in every cloud, however dark. In the midst of all these bitter scenes, Holly Copeland's education was progressing.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

"WHERE IS JOHN?"

BUT Miss Fannie Copeland was not to get away from the temperance question that day. It followed her up-stairs to her pretty room. She heard Holly's voice below; he had brought the mail, and her mother called to her that there was a letter from Mildred. She went to the head of the stairs to receive it, and promised to come down presently and read it aloud; for her mother was very fond of Mildred.

But Fannie did not read that letter to her mother. It was a long letter. There was a very brief account of home engagements and plans, and then the writer plunged into the subject which evidently filled her heart.

"And now, dear Fannie, at the risk of

seeming to force your confidence, I want to ask you whether there is any truth in the rumor, which reaches me through outside parties, that you are very intimate with that Mr. Bruce. We are dear friends, Fannie, you and I, and you must forgive me for speaking plainly. I hope there is nothing in it; because I am afraid for that young man. There is a lady in the Mission Rooms who has a brother belonging to one of the departments. He visited her yesterday, and had just returned from Eastwood. He visits at the Flemings'. You may have seen him, though he says he did not meet you there last week. Well, he had a number of Eastwood names, and among them that of young Bruce. He says it is common report in Fred Fleming's set that the young man is drinking. Fred Fleming declared that it was so, and that something ought to be done to save him. Poor Fred needs saving, you know. It is pitiful, is it not, to think of his trying to save another from coming after him on the downward road?

"Fannie, I have not been able to think of anything else since I talked with that young man. I am afraid that the reports about Mr. Bruce's habits are too true. It seems this young man, whose name is Weston, used to know a family by the name of Bruce, and interested himself to discover whether this was any connection; so he heard much about him from several sources. I don't credit the report of your intimacy, and shall not, until I hear it from you, because I know how fond Eastwood is of gossiping in those directions. I hope to receive a letter from you by return mail, telling me that it is all nonsense.

"Still, Fannie dear, I have such a sore heart, that I cannot help warning you, even though I hope and pray that it may be unnecessary. You remember Leonard Aire-dale, of course? You remember how sure you were that he did not drink wine? I liked to hear you say so, yet I did not believe it even then. Something about him made me afraid. I persisted until I found that he did. When he went to Chicago,

he was under a very solemn promise to me not to touch another drop. I tried to have him sign a regular pledge; but that he would not do. He said that he considered the pledge made to me more sacred. Fannie, he has gone down! down! Broken that pledge, and every other that an honorable man could. I have been rescued, I suppose, from the depths. I thank God for saving me, but it has been at the expense of a sore heart. This is why I am writing all this to you. I hope I am coming before there has been time for any sick hearts. Fannie, my dear friend, don't trust a man who ever touches a drop of alcohol for medicine, or in any other conceivable way. It has been Leonard Airedale's ruin. Don't trust the common promise of any man who has ever tasted the stuff. There is a demon in it to drag men down. I would not trust any man, save on his knees, asking God's grace to help him keep the pledge which he has taken before God and men. A man who will not take a pledge to help him keep from doing what he says he does

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not intend to do, is, I believe, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, not sincere, and wants to leave a loophole for his possible indulgence. And any young man who in the light of to-day does not stand squarely in the front of the battle and work with brain and voice, and vote for the cause of total abstinence, is, I believe, not sincere. How can he be, when everybody admits that souls are being ruined by the curse of liquor. Then am I not bound to lift up my voice, and, as soon as I can get a chance, give my vote against it?

"Suppose I accomplish nothing. Has God ever asked me to accomplish? Has he not simply asked me to try? If I try and *try* and TRY and fail, will he hold me accountable for the failure? But if I do not try, simply because it seems almost certain that I shall fail, am I free from responsibility? Forgive me, Fannie, I did not mean to write you a temperance lecture; but I feel deeply on this whole question. It has burned me. I would not have you suffer a fraction of what I have. Let me beg

you, dear friend, to open your eyes very wide to this question, and take such ground as you will wish you had, when we stand at the judgment, with all the ruined fathers and sons and brothers and husbands and lovers, who are going to meet us there."

There was much more, but I have given you enough to show you that Fannie Copeland had her warning. I can not tell you that she heeded it lightly. She was indignant over it; she cried over it; she was fearful over it. That very Friday evening when young Bruce came into her mother's parlor, and asked if he might rest there until it was time to go to the train for the doctor, she proposed that instead, they go, he and she, to the temperance meeting in the hall, and go from there to the train. He had fifteen excuses. The night was dark, and unusually damp; he was sure her father would not like to have her out. It was a long walk from the hall to the train; her father was to bring an important piece of medical machinery with him, which must be transported from the train to the office

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with great care. He should need to take the sleigh; it was not large enough for three. The proposition began to look unreasonable. Why didn't he attend those meetings occasionally? He had not time. Was he interested in the question? Well, yes, in a sense. All men were. He did not believe in the extreme measures of some; in fact, he was not fanatically inclined in any direction he believed. And yet Eben Bruce's conscience said to him then and there:

"Bruce, you are talking like a fool. If anybody ought to be a fanatic on this subject, you ought, and you know it."

Had he signed the pledge? Why, no, he hadn't. When he was a youngster, his mother had not approved of pledges; a little of the old notion clung to him now, he supposed. Then his conscience said again:

"No, it isn't, Eben Bruce. That is all nonsense. You have proved it in argument. It is a new notion which clings to you, a feeling that you cannot consent to put it out of your power, morally speaking, to in-

dulge that horrible craving for alcohol which sometimes comes upon you. You are too weak to want to do it, though you hate its chains, and are afraid of its power."

"Don't you believe in pledges of any kind?" asked Fannie.

The young man, under the spell of the earnest eyes which were looking at him, more full of soul than they ever had been before, arose and went over to her side, and dropped into the seat before her, and said:

"Yes, I do. I believe in our pledging ourselves, now and here, to be the best and dearest friends to each other that the world has ever known. Will you take that pledge with me, Fannie?"

That was a master stroke of the enemy. Fannie, startled, flushed, confused, pleased, forgot caution and fear, and the future. And the golden opportunity passed.

It was a decent and decorous funeral that they gave the body of poor old Joel Hart-

zell. Doctor Brandon came and conducted the service. He was no stranger to the house by this time. He had knelt frequently by the silent old man during the weeks past, and asked God to have mercy on his soul. He was familiar with the story of those last days. He had himself seen a gleam of intelligence on the old face that last time he called, and heard a murmured "amen" to his petition. On the whole, Doctor Brandon read the words, "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power," over the bruised and battered and sadly ill-used old body, with a sense of awe and wonder and grave delight, such as he did not often experience. To think that there was a Saviour great enough and good enough not only to forgive old Joel Hartzell, but to raise up for him a glorious body, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

"Verily, we have a wonderful Saviour," he said to Mr. Cleveland, as the two stood together over the wreck that life and death had made, and saw, both of them, the

look of something almost like dignity that the old face had taken in its last sleep.

"Aye, that we have," said Mr. Cleveland. "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' That is wonderful, too. No human being can think of old Joel as a saint; but God will."

Miss Wainwright's carriage held John, and his wife and Kate. Mr. Cleveland's carriage led the way, with the minister beside him. And there followed a carriage which held Miss Wainwright and Miss Hunter. And another, with the doctor and Holly. This little bit of thoughtfulness touched Kate, almost more than any of the numberless other kindnesses had. It was so unexpected, and, in the eyes of the world, so unnecessary.

Do you know just how strange the house to which they returned seemed to them? It was in nice order. The bed had been neatly made up, and was empty. The little stand which had stood at the head of the bed, and held glasses and spoon, and lamp—all needful things—was empty, save for

the little lamp, which, newly filled, stood waiting for them. Kate lighted it, for the early twilight was already setting in, and shaded it from the bed; then quickly took the shade away. There was no need for it now. She sat down in the rocking-chair, which had been brought from somewhere weeks ago, for her comfort, and folded her hands, and looked about her. It was a strange feeling. She was at leisure. The occupation which had held body and mind for weeks was gone. There was a strange sense of desolation. She had not thought to deeply mourn her father. But one night, that last night of his life, he had said to her:

"Kiss me, Kate; you used to when you were a little girl. Poor Kate; I shall be out of your way in a little while. I meant to take such good care of you; I promised her I would, and I didn't. I don't know but she will be disappointed at seeing me; do you think she will?"

And Kate had answered quickly:

"Oh, no, father; oh, father, no! She will be glad, and I will come."

"And John?" he had said quickly, with an upward inflection in his voice. And she had said it after him assuringly:

"And John."

It took with her all the sacredness of a pledge. As she thought of this last talk, the tears came thick and fast. She was missing her father. Yet there was a strange sweetness in the tears. It was so blessed to think that he lived even so little bit of a life that could be sweetly missed.

Mrs. John Hartzell went about softly preparing the neat supper. She was sorry for Kate. She had never thought to feel a shadow of regret for the father whom she had known only as a trial. But there had been some last words, in the stillness of the night, spoken also to her. She did not tell them, but she treasured them.

Thus in silence and peace the evening gathered around them. Suddenly wife and sister awoke at once to the same question, a startled look in the eyes of both:

"Where is John?"

"He went home with the chairs from the

corner," Mrs. Hartzell said, "and he said while he was about it he would step down to Dunlap's and get a little flour. I must bake to-morrow; and the flour is all gone. But I thought he would be back before this time. I told him we would have tea early."

Kate gave a quick, little exclamation, as quickly suppressed, but it sounded a note of warning to the wife. She looked up, startled.

"Why, Kate, you don't think!"

And then she stopped; her face blanched with fear. She had not thought of it before. It is so easy to learn to trust one's husband, when one wants to trust him; and John's step had been so firm during the past weeks. It was not possible that she was to be plunged back into the living death from which she had been creeping up. Could she bear it? Would not the merciful grave which they had seen closed that afternoon open again and take her in? Could she bear the suspense for an hour? She rose up and began to walk rapidly back and forth in the little room.

"Kate," she said fiercely, "you don't think; you can't believe —"

"I don't know," said Kate, drawing a hard, slow breath. "John is tired; he has been under a heavy strain, and he has been excited all day; and there are fiends abroad in the town."

Do you think they will ever forget that evening, those two women, sitting beside the empty bed watching out of the west window and the south window? Glancing now and then at the untasted supper on the table; listening to the dreary song of the neglected teakettle; listening constantly for the sound of footsteps which came not?

They did not sit inertly; they went, first the wife, and then the sister, out into the night and the darkness; down the steps, down the lane, out to first one corner and then the other, and crept back, after a little, alone, frightened, almost maddened, with anxiety and fear. Before the midnight of that awful night was reached, earth seemed to the two to contain nothing sweeter than that lately-closed grave. Oh

to be hidden out of sight and sound within its quiet arms!

It was midnight when John Hartzell came home. His wife was out on the steps peering down into the darkness. She heard him; stumbling, swearing, knocking violently at a post which he fancied ran against him. She shrank into shadow as he passed her; but she need not have cowered back; he was too drunk to see her in the dim twilight. He stumbled into the house, and sank down a limp heap on the broken step.

"O God!" she said, "O God!"

Do you think it was not a prayer, and that the pitying God will not see that she is avenged?

Kate had fled to the little closet room; from whence, after the drunkard had thrown himself on that neat and so recently vacated bed, and was lost to sound, she stole out in search of the wife.

"O Annie," she said in low and piteful tones, "poor Annie, come in, dear. You will die out here in the cold. He will not

hear us. Come, let me help you in;" and the poor wife looked up at the young girl, her eyes tearless, her face white with agony; but she only repeated that solemn, awful name, "O God!"

"God is in heaven, Annie, and he hears; be sure he hears. The time is coming when he will avenge his own. We belong to him, Annie, and father belongs to him. Let me help you in."

And she fairly lifted the stricken wife in her arms and bore her into that closet, where the rest of that night was spent.

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CHAPTER XXX.

THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

THEY had heard it the next day. Lloyd McLean was told by his old friend Eben Bruce.

"Were you found last night by a young whirlwind?" he asked, as the two met on the street and shook hands, and then Eben explained, and was questioned, and cross-questioned.

"No, you don't tell me that the fiends got hold of him! Confound this thing! Eben, you and I ought to go into it with a will. I hear of new victims every day. Who knows what will come next? You look wretchedly, Eben, are you overworking, or what? No need to rush so now, man; why don't you take it easily? And nobody went to the rescue, so far as you know?

That was dreadful! What were you about that you did not go yourself?"

He waited for no answers but hurried away. At the postoffice door stood Mr. Cleveland.

"Have you heard," began Lloyd, and then stopped.

Yes, he had heard, and his face had actually seemed to age under it.

"I am broken down," he said almost tremulously. "I dare not go around there, McLean; what can we do? If he only had felt less confidence in himself! If I had only stayed by him last night! But I did not dream—and yet, I might have known; it was just the time."

If the young fellow who had been the evening before in search of *fun* could have looked on the foiled worker's face just then, he might have seen effect enough certainly to have afforded him fun of his sort for some time to come. There was more of it at the Hartzell home, whither Mr. Cleveland presently went.

"Where is he?" he asked, holding out

his hand to Kate, saying not another word.
"We do not know."

"What! They told me he came home.
They watched him, some of them."

"Yes, and we let him slip away." Her face crimsoned as she said it. "I don't know how we could, but I was frightened for Annie. After I got her into the house she had a sort of fit. I could not rouse her, and then she moaned and cried in an unnatural way; and when, hours after, she grew quiet, and I thought her asleep, I would not move for fear of disturbing her, and I sat and held her. When at last she stirred, and sat up, and looked about her, she said: 'I haven't been asleep. Did you hear a noise? I am afraid he is gone.' We came out here at once and he had. It was just in the gray morning, just at the time that father went home, Mr. Cleveland. I heard no noise, but Annie thinks she did. She thinks he must have awakened, enough himself to remember, and then, in shame and misery, have slipped away from us. She mourns so, that she was not be-

side him to have held him. I don't know what to do with her; I am afraid she will lose her reason."

She looked like it—hollow-eyed woman. No tears to shed. Her eyes looked as though they might burn, rather than weep. Mr. Cleveland gave her his hand in utter silence. He felt rebuked; appalled. Had he been unfaithful to his trust? Why did he not stay by the wreck until it was placed in safer harbor? He who knew so well that wreckers were abroad.

The wife was the first to speak:

"We must find him, Mr. Cleveland."

Some way the words gave him courage.

"Yes," he said quickly, "and we must save him. It will not do to sit down and count all lost because he has fallen again. Perhaps we should have expected that."

Before he could say more, there was a rush up the broken step and Holly Cope-land stood beside them.

"O Kate," he began, his voice eager, "I tried, I did not get anything done, but I tried so hard. And Kate, I'll tell you,

while the rum is all over, as it is, there is no way to do but to watch it, and fight it all the time. We must just get rid of it, or there will be no peace ever."

He said it in such a tone of quiet conviction, as though that question were settled for all time, that Mr. Cleveland could hardly forbear a smile.

Then Holly had his story to tell, and its recital did not make the self-reproachings of the man who listened any easier to bear.

"We were all unfaithful," said Kate. "Annie and I ought to have held him. I did not think. It seemed to me last night that for hours my heart would only take in one thought, and that was that father was safe forever."

"God saved father, and God must save John. Nobody else can."

It was the wife who spoke, and her words took hold of the listeners with the power of a conviction.

"Amen," said Mr. Cleveland.

Then came a conference as to what to do first.

"Is your faith equal to the strain?"

This was the question which Mr. Cleveland asked of Kate as he turned to her to say good-by. They had planned what there was to do. For the women it was that hardest part, to wait at home. In the meantime, men were to be placed on the alert; a sort of impromptu vigilance committee formed, whose first object would be to decoy John Hartzell back to his home; after that, they must plan the next step. It was not to be easy work; they all felt that. John Hartzell had been too hard a drunkard to yield the struggle easily, now that the demon was roused again.

"I do not know," Kate said, a wan smile on her face; "I do not know whether the name of it is faith or presumption. When he saved father it seems to me such an easy thing for him to save John; if only John will."

"Yes," the listener said, "that is the only 'if.' God must be true to himself or he would not be God."

Then he went away and left them to

their harder task. All day the watching and the searching availed nothing. Apparently John Hartzell had dropped from the ranks of the living as completely as his father had. Perhaps the most disgusted member of the vigilance committee was Lloyd McLean. In his eager search all the early part of the evening—for it was not until evening that he could be released from office duty to enter systematically upon his work—he came in contact with more of the low and revolting features of rum than he had ever even imagined.

"No, he ain't here, my hearty," said a drunken wretch in answer to the young man's inquiry as he opened the door of one of the lowest dens, "I ain't seen John Hartzell this blessed day. Shouldn't wonder if he had gone and drowned himself out of respect to his father. It is a great thing to lose a father; I lost one once myself; come in and have a drink in memory of it. I know you; why, yes, of course I do; you're one of us, ain't you? I saw you the other night up at the hall, when them

fellows was whimpering around with their pledge. We don't sign no pledges, do we, you and me? We believe in liberty of conscience, and free speech, and all that sort of thing, don't we? Come in, my friend, and treat the resolution to be men. No, sir, no pledges for us."

And he gave the disgusted young man a familiar slap on the shoulder as he would have done to a boon companion.

Lloyd McLean slammed the door hard, to drown the coarse laughter of those who were not too drunk to appreciate the joke, and walked down the street with a face whose color deepened as he thought.

The hall where the temperance meetings were held was the place of rendezvous for the searchers, and thither he went, to find Cleveland alone.

"Any news?" asked the latter, eagerly.

"No, there isn't. I haven't received the suspicion of a trail. I say, Cleveland, I've seen and heard enough to-night to make a man feel sure that there must be a place in reserve for lost souls. And I've seen

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something else. I wish it were Friday night. I hope we can work up such a rousing meeting as this town has never seen; and if you will have fifty total abstinence pledges here, I will sign them all. And then let us organize a permanent league, and have a fund, and go to work in dead earnest. This thing has been handled with gloves on long enough. I tell you what it is, I'm roused."

"Good!" said Mr. Cleveland. "The saloons are building better than they imagine, after all. They are at work educating workers. But in the meantime, my friend, where is John Hartzell?"

In order to explain to you where he was at that moment, I shall have to return to the Hartzell home, and the people waiting there. Little had been said all day. Kate had prepared food with care, and a certain degree of daintiness — prepared it with reference to the possibility of one coming who would be faint, and burning with unnatural thirst; but no one came, and the food remained almost entirely untouched. Kate

tried to sew, and seemed unable to set the stitches; she tried to read, and the words seemed only to be, "Where is John? Father is safe; but where is John?"

Thus the day dragged its slow length away. Suddenly, as twilight was settling on them again, Mrs. Hartzell sprang up with a new determination in her face.

"I'm going there to watch. I wonder I did not think of it before. I won't come back without him, Kate, you will see."

"Where, Annie? where are you going?"

"To the little room—the little, bright room; didn't Miss Hunter tell you about it? We passed it once, John and I, that night we took a walk, and I told him about it. I'm going there to watch. You stay here, Kate, and be ready if he should happen to come home; but I can't—I can't wait another minute. So many people keep going by that room; he must be among them."

And Kate was silent. It was a dreary place for a young girl to sit down alone, with only a vacant bed, and the thought

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of a grave to keep her company; but she could see that whether the bright little room ever did anything for John or not, it might save his wife's reason; so she helped her on with the worn bonnet and the faded shawl; and the poor creature, who had heard, before God, the pledge that she should be loved and cherished until death parted them, went her way to watch for the one from whom worse than death had parted her.

All night she stayed alone in the bright room. People passed and *passed*, and talked and laughed, and whistled, and sang, and swore; but John Hartzell was not among them. The town hushed itself into quiet after a while; but still that light burned, and the shades were stretched high. Miss Hunter slipped down from her room above, once in a while, and looked on the watcher now kneeling by the window, looking up to the stars, and to the God above the stars, and shook her head, and went back to pray. Once she came, and, touching the kneeling figure, said:

"You are to eat a bite now. It won't do to be all run down when he comes, so that you haven't strength to hold on to him."

The plea reached the watcher's mind, and she ate and drank with resolute air, like one who was resolved to be strong. Who would have supposed that the frail, sheltered, white-robed, pink-ribboned darling of the years long gone could wait and watch and endure like this?

Yet the night and the day went by, and he did not pass. Where was he? Skulking! That is the only word for it. A miserable, shamefaced, utterly-cowed, despairing man. He had drunk to drunkenness, he had spent his last cent, he had pawned his hat, he had been kicked out, he had stumbled to his old home, he had slept the drunkard's sleep, he had awakened—not enough himself to realize his misery, but to realize only that he must have more rum. Yet rum he could not get. The vigilance committee was at work before he had made many attempts, and by ten o'clock of the

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morning not a rumseller would have dared to furnish John Hartzell with liquor. There were certain who could have hinted as to his whereabouts at intervals during the day, had they chosen to do so; but it suited their policy to be entirely ignorant. So it was that, by evening of the second day, he was sober and desperate. He had lost all trust in himself, all hope in others. He had settled it a dozen times within the hour that he was a lost man; that there was no hope for him in this world or the next; that he wanted nothing, hoped for nothing, but liquor; and, unless he could have that, he should go mad. He had settled it that he would never go home again. He would get away as far as possible, then he would beg, or steal, or anything, to get enough alcohol to kill him. This—as nearly as he can be said to have had a plan—was the plan of the miserable man who was hiding himself alike from enemies and friends.

Mrs. Hartzell went home in the early morning, after her night's vigil. She shook

her head in answer to Kate's inquiring look; but she shook it with a faint little smile.

"Kate," she said, going over to her, "he has not come yet, but I think he will. I have something to tell you. I have learned to pray. Did you know it? I cannot think how I came to give way so entirely the other night, after I had found God. I did not think I ever should again, but it came upon me so suddenly; some way, I had trusted him entirely. Now, I am trusting God. *He* will not fail me. I think John will come."

She did not say much more. She ate her breakfast steadily, with the air of one determined to conquer the utter want of appetite. She slept a good deal during the day, with the air of one preparing for conflict. At dusk she came out with the old bonnet on.

"I hate to leave you alone, Kate; but you must stay, lest he should come; and I must go and watch, for fear he will not come."

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"I know," said Kate. She spoke as one almost awed. She did not know this resolute sister-in-law. She could but think that this was a courage born of God.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER.

MR. CLEVELAND, when he came to learn if possibly something had been heard from the lost man at his home, found Kate there alone.

"This will not do," he said positively, when he took in the situation, "it will not do at all; you cannot stay in such a neighborhood as this alone."

"I must," said Kate, gravely, "and therefore I can; it is my part of this tragedy. We must not desert the only place he knows as home, lest he might come."

"But is there not somebody to stay with you?"

She shook her head.

"Nobody from whom I do not shrink more than from solitude. There are few

neighbors here, and those not of a sort to depend on in time of need."

"Where is the woman whose baby died?"

"Watching over the next one, who is also going to die. The world is full of sorrow for some, Mr. Cleveland."

He turned from her abruptly, with the briefest possible good-night. It was then nine o'clock. He went with long, swift strides down the street, making no pauses until he reached Miss Wainwright's home. Then he gave such a jerk to the bell-knob as brought that energetic woman herself, but a step behind Keziah, to see what was the matter.

"What is it?" she asked, the moment she caught sight of the messenger. "Any news?"

"No news at all. We are watching every street corner, and every rum-hole in town. It does not seem possible, if he is alive, that he can elude us much longer. Miss Wainwright, she is quite alone in the house; in that neighborhood."

"Who is?"

"Kate, utterly alone; not even a neighbor to call upon. If he should come home in the night, raving, as he is liable to do, or if a dozen other things should happen, what would become of her?"

"Where is the wife?"

"Gone to Miss Hunter's bright little room to watch. It is a heaven-born idea. But it makes it no less desolate and dreadful for Kate. Can you think of anything to do? Is there some one, some woman who can be hired to go there for the night?"

"No," said Miss Wainwright, speaking slowly, "I do not suppose there is; at least, if there is, I am not acquainted with her. Miss Hunter would go, but she is looking after the poor wife, I suppose. Well, I asked the Lord to give me work in the cause. To be sure, I did not expect it to come in this form, but work isn't apt to come in the form in which you have planned it; I have always noticed that. I'll be ready in ten minutes, Mr. Cleveland. Come in."

"You!" said Mr. Cleveland. It was genuine astonishment. Miss Wainwright was never known to spend a night away from her beautiful old home.

"To be sure. What else is there to do? Come in where it is warm. Keziah, get my things, and bring the wicker basket I packed this afternoon. You can carry it, can't you, Mr. Cleveland? It isn't very heavy.

"Keziah might go," she said, lowering her voice as she looked after the astonished handmaiden; "but Keziah, though a jewel in some respects, is a nuisance in others. The fact is, she is a coward. If I were to send her down there, I should expect her to die of a thousand imaginary evils before morning, besides making a nuisance of herself generally to poor Kate. Oh, I'll go, of course; there is nothing else to do."

"But you cannot walk there, my dear Miss Wainwright; I will go for my carriage; I can have it here in ten minutes."

"No, you won't; I can walk well enough if I choose. I'm not over fond of walking,

and see no reason why I should do it for pleasure, since there is no pleasure in it; but I *can* walk, on occasion, and would rather do it than ride after those horses of yours, in the night, especially over on the Flats. Peter has a cold; I sent him home early with orders to soak his feet and go to bed, or you might go over for him. But there is no need, I can walk."

She was as good as her word; ready in less than ten minutes, and they were out together in the clear starlight. As they passed the brightly-lighted hall, Mr. Cleveland gave, incidentally, a bit of information.

"We had the largest temperance meeting to-night we have had at all, and the most enthusiastic one. Some of our friends are getting pretty thoroughly roused; this thing has stirred their blood. Lloyd McLean went forward the moment the opportunity was given, and put his name to the total abstinence pledge, and he has been working like a general for signers ever since. I left the meeting in his charge when I came away."

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"Thank the Lord!" said Miss Wainwright. There was a ring in her voice, which he noticed as peculiar. "Why didn't you tell me that before?" she demanded.

"I forgot for the moment that the ladies were not out at the meeting this evening. Why, are you particularly interested in him?"

"I am particularly interested in all young men; and, besides," added the truthful voice, after a moment of silence, "I knew his father once."

"Ah, yes, I remember."

But there was very little that he knew to remember. The son of an old friend; this was enough to account for a special interest. He had felt a peculiar interest himself in the bright young man, and there had always been a fear that he was in danger from the gay world.

The stand taken this evening had given him a momentary feeling of joy; but the experiences of the past few days were so absorbing him, that it had quickly passed from his mind. As they turned the corner

which led to the Flats, Mr. Cleveland said:

"She stayed all alone in the house last night; it ought not to have been. This is no place for an unprotected young girl like her. Miss Wainwright, I don't know how to thank you for this night's sacrificing kindness."

"Why should *you* thank me?" asked this plain-spoken woman. "Why, is it anything to you?"

To this no sort of answer was given, and the rest of the walk was taken in complete silence.

It was after midnight again and the town was still. Revelry there might be behind closely-drawn shades, or close-folding shutters, but the respectable portion of the old town was, for the most part, in bed. Houses were dark. There was starlight, and a late moon, therefore the street lamps were not lighted.

One window was bright. The little cheery room, with its bright fire burning in the grate; its two rocking-chairs, drawn up to

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the table, waiting; its big old Bible on the stand showed plainly to the passer-by. At the window there knelt again a woman. She had shaded the light in the early evening, when many were passing, and shaded herself from public gaze, as well as she could, and, at the same time, not lose the sight of any face. But now the light burned up brightly, and she watched and waited.

Suddenly she gave a quick spring forward into the night.

"John," she said, her voice low and clear, "John," and she caught at the sleeve, and held on.

"Let me alone," said a muffled voice; "let me go."

She held on, and held with force, and drew him by sheer force backward a step. She had carefully kept up her strength all day for this moment.

"John, oh, John, come in; come in here. See! I am all alone; it is a nice place. No one will see you or hear; I have waited, and *waited* for you."

He tried to hold back even then, but she drew him by the power of her stronger will. He was fairly within the little bright room at last. She shut the door with a quick backward motion, and turned the key, and drew it from the lock. Then she drew down the shades; the outside world must not look in now.

"John," she said, "sit down, poor John, and tell me all about it. They got hold of you, and you did not mean it; I know you did not. I trust you fully, John; you did not mean to go away from me ever again, but they got hold of you before you knew it, and then you were not willing to come home. I know all about it; you need not tell me. You are hungry; you must eat; I have supper waiting for you."

She slipped into the outer room, the speck of a kitchen. The key was in her pocket. There was a bit of a cookstove there, and something hot and nourishing simmered on it. Miss Hunter herself was bending over it, rapidly dishing it up. She had a cup by her side, and she sat down

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the bowl, and poured coffee, hot and strong.
"Give him this," she said. The wife's
eyes were shining like coals. "Take this
to him; I will get the other ready."

Mrs. Hartzell seized the cup, and went
back to her husband.

A night to remember? I should think
so. As long as memory lasts to John
Hartzell's wife, either on this side or the
other, she knows that she will remember
every word and look, and almost every
thought of that night, as though it were
photographed in pictures of flame before
her. It was more than that; it was cut
into her heart.

She dealt with a soul on the very verge
of human despair. You know nothing about
the drunkard's despair. You cannot imagine
it; neither, they tell me, can I. I have
heard one talk, and his picture was so
vivid that it seems to me at times I can
imagine the scene, yet what must it be to
feel it?

He drank the coffee, drank it with a
feverish thirst, but he did it sullenly. He

asked her why she was there. He told her that all was over; that he had given up; that he had been in hell for the last thirty-six hours, and he knew that such was his portion. She must let him go. Why had she brought him there to torture him? His misery was deep enough now. He was going away where he would never trouble her or Kate any more. They would never hear of him again.

To all of which she made answer only in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, "John, eat that, or drink this." Her excitement seemed to be gone. She was as still as the night, and as gentle in her tones and ways as a child. When she felt that he had taken all the nourishment she dared to give, she set aside the empty cup, and came and knelt down before him.

"John, look here, I am not to be deserted. I will not be. It is folly for you to talk in that way to me, for you cannot get away from me. We promised ourselves to each other forever, and there is no such thing as getting away from it. I will go

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with you to the world's end if you say so, but remember I am to be *with* you. John, you know the sort of life your father lived, but you must forget that and remember the way he died.

"'Annie,' he said to me, that last night, 'remember this: God has saved me, and he can save anybody; that proves it. Do you never give up John for a minute. We must spend eternity together to make up for the way we have thrown away time.'

"I promised him, John, and I mean to keep the promise. And now, I want to tell you another thing: You can begin life over again, and make up here. Father waited too long, but you are young; you can undo ever so much of the past. I know how to do it, and I can tell you the only way. You want God; you must have his power with you all the time. It is the only way to get through this dangerous world. I know I should have died last night, or gone mad, if I had not had God to hide me. He can hide you, and he will do it. Listen to this: 'In the fear

of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge.' Think of that 'shall'; how strong it is! God's 'shall'! That is what you need. That is what you are looking for. I can show you how to find it. Think of walking these streets in strong confidence that no one can touch you, because God has his strength wrapped all about you. John, you have tried it, and you know that human strength will not do. Here is God's strength waiting for you. And the way is so easy. Get down on your knees here with me and just say, 'God, for Christ's sake, take me, hide me in that place of refuge.' He promised it, so he will never refuse you; just a word and the thing is done. You don't know about it, what a strength there is and a power, but you will. He can't save you unless you want to be saved, and are willing to let him do it."

He had never heard such words before from his wife. In their earlier years, she had been gentle and shrinking, and during the later bitter experiences of life she had

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been cowed and sullen. Now she was calm and resolute, and as sure, apparently, of the rock on which she rested, as though it had been visible granite under her feet. It was no new story to this well-taught man. He had forgotten it long ago; but the memories of early years came trooping up to him, verse after verse of promise, pleading, warning, came and knocked at his heart. Never was there a fiercer battle waged with Satan for a soul than went on in that room that night, where the shades were drawn close for the first time.

The hours passed, and the gray dawn of another morning began to creep over the world. In the little room they did not know it, for the shades were heavy and the lamp burned brightly still. At the back door in the kitchen there came a low tap. Miss Hunter went on tiptoe and set the door ajar. The knocker was Mr. Cleveland.

"We saw him come in," he murmured, "and he certainly has not gone out again. I thought perhaps I ought to come and see if help were needed."

Miss Hunter stepped out into the frosty air and closed the door behind her. Even with this precaution she bent forward and spoke in a whisper:

"Mr. Cleveland, he prayed. I heard his voice, and I heard the first words; then I stopped my ears for I knew that they ought to be alone with God. I believe he is a saved man. I don't like to disturb them, but the fire must be getting low, and pretty soon they ought to have some breakfast."

The prosaic and the eternities mingling! Yet while the flesh enfolds us, what are we to do without the prosaic? God bless the souls who, capable of rising to the heights which belong to immortality, yet think of fire and breakfast.

Mr. Cleveland made one more call before he took his breakfast. Kate was up and dressed, and looking out of the south window, with the first streaks of morning sunlight glinting over her. She did not stop for his knock, but came to the door silent, waiting. He held out his hand to her smiling.

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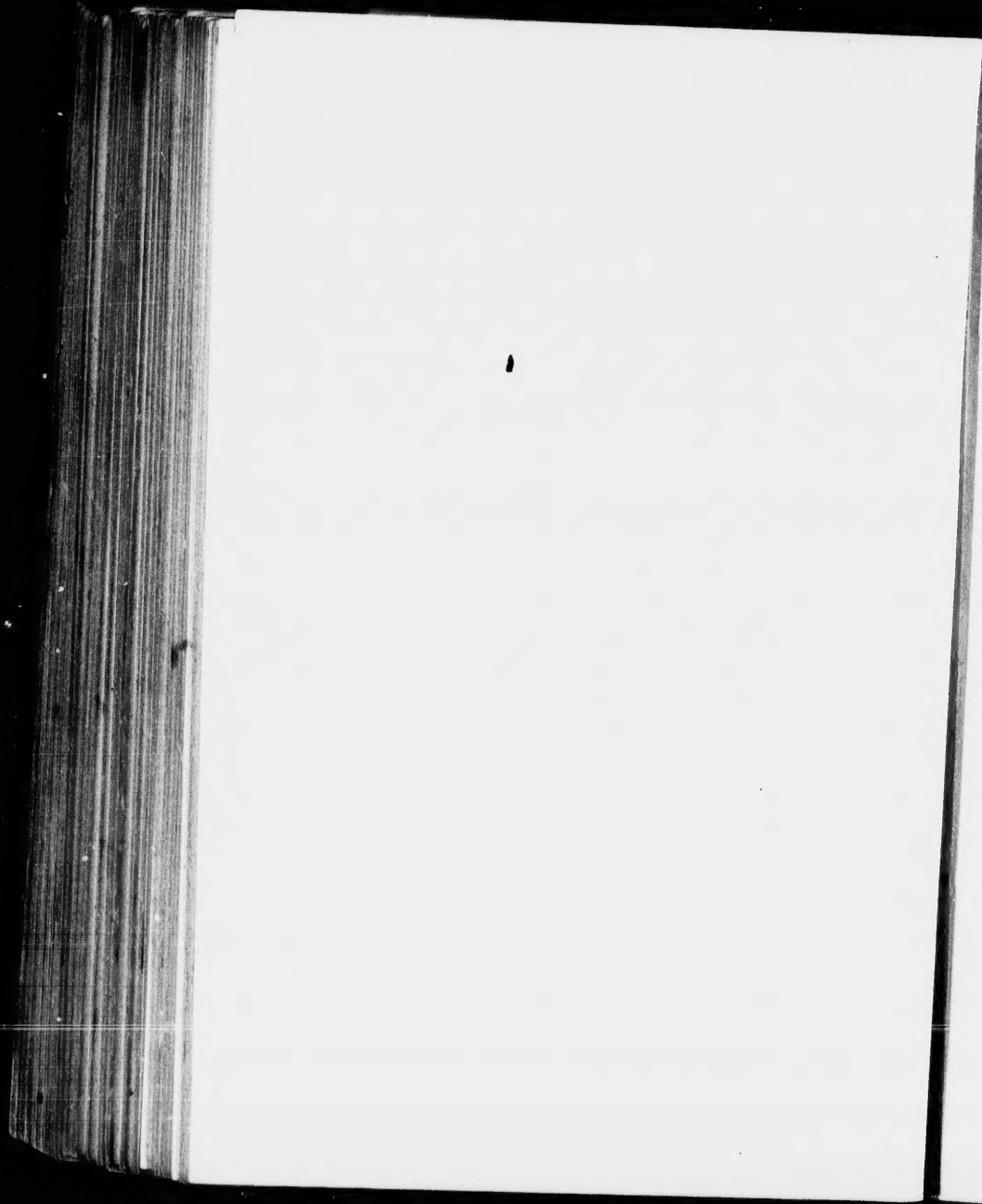
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"Do you remember an old story which ran thus, 'Inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth?' History has repeated itself; if you inquire for one John Hartzell, behold he prayeth! That is the last word I have had of him, not ten minutes ago. Kate, God has come down to us and stretched out his hand of power, and supplemented our weakness. Now you and I, with this token of what he is willing to do, must join hands and reach out to Him in behalf of the perishing world. Can we work together, Kate?"

And then Miss Wainwright came to the door.

"I heard the first words," she said, "and went back to thank the Lord. Now you two may come in and have some breakfast. It is early, but somehow it seemed to me that a good breakfast would be needed here this morning, so I got up early and looked after it."

And once more the eternities and the blessed prosaics met.



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